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A REFRESHER COURSE IN PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING

By

W. J. WESTON

M.A., B.Sc.

Author of

“English Grammar and Composition.”

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PREFACE

Punctuation and Spelling trouble many. They were touched on lightly in the *Refresher Course in English*. This book is in fact an expansion of Studies XXIII and XXIV of the English book. Here you are asked to spend more time upon the study of these troublesome topics ; and we trust that *Punctuation and Spelling* will greatly help your study.

It may be well to repeat what was said in the Preface to *Refresher Course in English*. Do not content yourself with a mere reading and a mere acquiescence in what you read. Work the Exercises : they are the really important part of the book.

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Study I

A PRELIMINARY TALK ABOUT STOPS

THE QUESTION

In what way does punctuation help a reader?

SOMETHING OF AN ANSWER

Look for a while at this passage shorn of its helping stops. It is an entertaining comment on "Hullo" and is taken from a *Times* article :

It is disturbing therefore to read that if everybody had answered hullo to the 2100000000 local and trunk calls made over the Post Office network last year something like 300 years of telephone line-time would have been wasted it is better it seems that people should on removing the receiver give their name or telephone number but name and number seem too formal and impersonal for the kind of conversation for which the telephone is often used im lingley of lingley ltd not one of you can touch me i turned myself into a company years ago remarked the unpleasant business man in mr sutton vanes play outward bound and the abrupt answer im dash of blank 10000 conveys the unfortunate impression that the subscriber has ceased to be an individual and has become something more pompous and important the concise oxford dictionary insists that the word is used to express surprise but it is only the lamentably facetious who on getting their number would bellow it over the wire in the sense of the old musichall song

hullo hullo whos your lady friend
whos the little girlie by your side

a greeting so archly humorous is only one degree preferable to the gruff portentous hullo which sets the conscience racing to discover what it has left undone.

Being patient and persevering you at length group the words in that passage as they should be grouped. You

separate the quotations from the writer's own words ; at the end you get the sense of the passage. But see how the stops and the interspersed capital letters would have saved your time and attention. See, too, how these helping stops conduce to certainty about the meaning :

It is disturbing, therefore, to read that if everybody had answered " hullo " to the 2,100,000,000 local and trunk calls made over the Post Office network last year " something like 300 years of telephone line-time would have been wasted ". It is better, it seems, that people should, on removing the receiver, give their name or telephone number. But name and number seem too formal and impersonal for the kind of conversation for which the telephone is often used. " I'm Lingley of Lingley Ltd. Not one of you can touch me. I turned myself into a company years ago," remarked the unpleasant business man in Mr. Sutton Vane's play *Outward Bound*, and the abrupt answer, " I'm Dash of Blank 10000 " conveys the unfortunate impression that the subscriber has ceased to be an individual and has become something more pompous and important. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* insists that the word is used to express surprise, but it is only the lamentably facetious who, on getting their number, would bellow it over the wire in the sense of the old music-hall song :

Hullo, hullo, who's your lady friend,
Who's the little girlie by your side ?

A greeting so archly humorous is only one degree preferable to the gruff, portentous " hullo " which sets the conscience racing to discover what it has left undone.

Writers once did well enough without stops, relying on the pertinacity of their readers. And perhaps it is well to look to your words and the arrangement of them for the expression of your meaning, rather than to the stops you call in to aid. Nor will you find among writers consistency in the use of stops, nor in such conventions as the capitalising of letters. But substantial agreement exists ; and they certainly make for greater ease in reading. You do well,

therefore, to make yourself familiar with their use. In these studies the practice of *The Times* is followed ; and you may safely take this practice as your own.

Why Stops are Desirable

Consider a while. When we speak, we make sounds that appeal to the ear : when we write, we make signs that appeal to the eye. The trouble is this : the signs are at times imperfect. In speech, the different voices, the changes in the single voice, the pauses made, all help towards understanding. You could, for example, utter the words " come now " so that they are a peremptory command : you do so when you utter them with a rising emphasis, making *now* the emphatic word. You could utter them so that they will be more or less a gentle remonstrance : you do so when you utter them with a falling emphasis, making *come* the emphatic word.

The stops are not perfect substitutes for the rise and fall of voice. They help, however. And in English, as compared with other languages, the various stops are called upon to do much work. For, when speaking English, we use differences of tone to express variations in meaning where other peoples use clearly uttered words. The careful use of stops helps our reader to interpret the signs as we intended them to be interpreted. Look at a few instances :

" Tom the piper's son stole a pig " : is that " The son of Tom the piper stole a pig " or, " [The piper's son, called Tom, stole a pig] ? Put in the commas to mark off the noun in apposition, and the doubt is resolved. " Tom, the piper's son, stole a pig."

You know that passage in *Macbeth*, where Macbeth is wavering in his resolution to kill Duncan : to Lady Macbeth, who seeks to strengthen his resolve, he says " If we should fail——" Now, Lady Macbeth's answer is at times punctuated in this way :

We fail !

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail.

at times in this way :

We fail.

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail.

The use of the exclamation mark after *fail* asks you to interpret the answer as "Fail ! You need only be resolute and there'll be no failure." It is an expression of astonishment that failure should be suggested, and *but* is equivalent to *only*. The use of the full-stop after *fail* asks you to interpret the answer as "Why, then we fail ; however, be resolute and we shall not fail " ; Lady Macbeth's answer is a grim acceptance of the result of failure, and *but* is equivalent to *however*. Which interpretation do you prefer ?

Instances for Your Study

Look at the comma after *only* in this eulogy of Panareta :

Oh ! how she danced, how she tripped, how she turned,
with what a grace ! O ! most incomparable, only, Panareta.

The comma away, there is but slight praise of the lady ; the comma present, she stands out unequalled, unique.

Where would you put a comma in the line of the carol " God rest you merry Gentlemen " ? Clearly after *merry*, not after *you* : " rest you merry " is the wish expressed.

It is well to note that the *form* in which a statement is couched determines the stop you need. The sentence may, in effect, be a quest for information. If, however, the sentence is couched as a command, the question mark is not to be used. A sentence may, in effect, be an order. If, however, the sentence is couched as a question, the question mark is to be used. For instance, with what stop would you close these two short sentences ?

1. Ask him who said so
2. Will you please stand back

The first, you say, needs a full stop. True, the direct question "Who said so?" needs a question mark. But the question is not direct, and the full-stop is the one needed. Compare these two sentences, in the first of which you have the inverted commas to mark off a direct quotation, in the second of which the inverted commas are omitted :

"What is all this story about?" asked my Mother.
My Mother asked what all that story was about.

The second sentence—"Will you please stand back?" you will agree, needs the question mark, even though it is in effect a command.

And note how the meaning alters with the position of the comma in a sentence like "He left the room very slowly repeating his determination not to obey": one meaning results with the comma after *room*, another with the comma after *slowly*.

The use of the full-stop to mark the end of a sentence you know. The stop and the beginning of a following sentence by a capital letter enable you to grasp each idea as you read on. There may sometimes be a difficulty in deciding whether or not to incorporate two or more sentences into one longer sentence. Very likely, for instance, you would combine these separate sentences into one complex sentence :

He shook hands with a few old comrades. He received their warm congratulations. One and all had some engagement for the evening. He found himself left entirely to his own resources.

This, you agree, reads better as :

He shook hands with a few old comrades, and received their warm congratulations; but, as one and all had some engage-

PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING

ment for the evening, he found himself left entirely to his own resources.

he Interpreting of Stops

ou come across a sentence punctuated in this way :

“ All contracts or agreements . . . by way of gaining or wagering shall be null or void.”

The inverted commas at the opening and the raised commas at the close is the writer's short way of saying to you, the reader, “ This is a quotation : it is not my own.” The short series of points between *agreements* and *by* says to you, “ I am leaving out here a passage that you may, if you wish, read in the statute from which I have quoted. I am leaving it out because it is not necessary for my argument.”

You read this report :

Mr. Justice Oliver had directed the jury that, although a betting transaction was not enforceable at law, a man who lost money to a bookmaker did incur a debt to him.

The comma after *that*, in conjunction with the comma after *law*, tells you, “ This sentence (although . . . law) is a parenthesis, an insertion : you can, if you wish, leave it out while till you consider the main statement.” You read his sentence :

The Home Guard is “ standing down ” after its long and arduous vigil.

The initial capital letters of “ Home Guard ” say to you, “ I am using *home* and *guard*, usually common nouns, in a special sense and I therefore ask you to regard ‘ Home Guard ’ as a Proper Noun.” The inverted commas before *standing*, together with the raised commas after *down*, says “ I am using ‘ standing down ’ in a technical sense ; you should interpret it as ‘ ceasing to be on a permanent footing ’.”

In the following studies we consider the various stops in some details. You may first, though, wish to see how far your own practice varies from the customary. If you do so wish, work the exercise below :

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Supply the omitted stops in :

- (1) The days of our age are threescore years and ten and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow so soon passeth it away and we are gone.
- (2) And now abideth faith hope charity these three but the greatest of these is charity.
- (3) Mahomet made the people believe that he would call a hill to him and from the top of it offer up his prayers for the observers of his law the people assembled Mahomet called the hill to come to him again and again and when the hill stood still he was never a whit abashed but said if the hill will not come to Mahomet Mahomet will go to the hill.

2. Insert the commas desirable :

- (1) Every general and every soldier was conscious of his own insignificance aware of being but a drop in that ocean of men and yet at the same time was conscious of his strength as a part of that enormous whole.
- (2) Quit you like men be strong.
- (3) Oh to be in England
 Now that April's there
 And whoever wakes in England
 Sees some morning unaware
 That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
 Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
 In England—now !
- (4) Our supreme governors the mob.
- (5) This world is a comedy to those that think a tragedy to those that feel.

PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING

ANSWERS

1. (1) The days of our age are threescore years and ten ; and though men be so strong that they come to four-score years : yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow ; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.

You have here a balanced sentence the two parts being separated by a colon, and the separate parts divided by semicolons.)

You will notice the preference for the solid *threescore* and *four-score* rather than the hyphenated *three-score* and *four-score*. *The Times'* rule is : unless the parts of a compound word are instinctively thought of as separate do not use the hyphen. Thus : *The Times* ; Indo-China ; the agreement of a two-way application of lend-lease, a wartime means.]

- (2) And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity.
- (3) Mahomet made the people believe that he would call a hill to him, and from the top of it offer up his prayers for the observers of his law. The people assembled : Mahomet called the hill to come to him again and again ; and when the hill stood still he was never a whit abashed, but said, " If the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the hill."
- (1) Every general and every soldier was conscious of his own insignificance, aware of being but a drop in that ocean of men, and yet at the same time was conscious of his strength as a part of that enormous whole.
- (2) Quit you like men, be strong.
- (3) Oh ! to be in England,
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now !
- (4) Our supreme governors, the mob.
- (5) This world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel.

Study II

THE PURPOSES OF PUNCTUATION

THE QUESTION

Are we able to assign a purpose to the stops a writer uses?

THE ANSWER

We can do this with some approach to completeness. Shall we, as a preliminary, examine closely the punctuation of a couple of passages? They are both from leading articles in *The Times*. Look at each stop in turn and try to assign a reason for its insertion. Now and again, possibly, you may demur and think that the passage might have been otherwise punctuated. On the whole, however, you will agree with the practice of *The Times*.

The first is from the commentary on "Pay as you Board":

London Transport is still experimenting with its latest type of bus, but seems to have come to no conclusions about it yet. This experimental vehicle is distinguished by a sign over the front destination blind bearing the words "Pay as you board bus", and passengers, entering a centrally placed platform, confront a counter presided over by a conductress who collects fares and issues tickets from a new type of cash register. The experiment would seem to be a minor, but logical, development of pay-as-you-earn, in that it cuts the period of indebtedness down and makes default impossible. The general trend of the war has forced the customer more and more to fend for himself, and surely the shade of SAMUEL SMILES must approve of this practical extension of his doctrines. If more of the physical burden is shifted on to the customer's shoulders, however, the moral load is proportionately lightened, and, should the London Transport's experiment become general, no longer will the inside passenger, without the exact fare,

with his destination rapidly approaching and the conductress upstairs, be faced with the embarrassment of having to force a coin on an unwilling neighbour.

Perhaps you should note first the use of capital letters. There is "London Transport", for instance, at the beginning, and "London Transport's experiment" further down. The capital letter for the first word of each sentence and the capital letter for a proper noun like "London" we are all familiar with; but what about "Transport"? Here "Transport" is used in a special sense as, in combination with "London", it serves as the proper noun for the vast organisation so familiar to Londoners. Notice the peculiar practice of *The Times* in printing, so far as its leading articles are concerned, the names of persons in capitals: SAMUEL SMILES, MR. EDEN, ARCHBISHOP DAMASKINOS, GENERAL PLASTIRAS, and so on. Probably you will not follow that practice.

After "bus" in the first sentence you have a comma, a quite helpful way of marking off the second clause. Evidently the writer considered the method of contrast in one sentence preferable to two sentences.

London Transport is still experimenting with its latest type of bus. London Transport, however, seems to have come to no conclusions about it yet.

The writer might have dispensed with the comma; for no misunderstanding, even transitory, would have resulted from its omission. Indeed, in an adjoining column a much longer sentence is presented for the reader's own grouping and, very likely, in spite of the length of the sentence, the absence of a stop was unnoticed by most readers. Read the two sentences below and ask yourself whether you really wanted the help of stops in the second of the two:

A unanimous House of Commons gave a second reading yesterday to the Wages Councils Bill. A far-reaching and

unprecedented measure for establishing standard wages and conditions of employment in all branches of industry was found to be uncontroversial and not only so but to be actively desired by all who recognise the immense importance of creating areas of stability in the difficult transition that will follow the war.

In the second sentence of the "Pay-as-you-Board" extract the comma after "bus" again separates two co-ordinate sentences: its absence might lead to a passing notion that "and" joined "bus" and "passengers". The inserted phrase, "entering a centrally placed platform", is marked off by commas; and you will agree that this marking off is a very desirable help to grouping. Similar parentheses are "but logical", "however", "should the London Transport's experiment become general", "without the exact fare", and "with his destination rapidly approaching and the conductress upstairs".

You will have noticed the possessive sign in "the customer's shoulders" and "London Transport's experiment".

Some writers would give, to each of the last two sentences, two separate full-stops: "for himself. And surely" and "lightened. And, should". What is your opinion about such a division?

The second extract is from an article inspired by the recovery of regimental drums:

The news of the recovery of the drums of British regiments, which were lost in France in 1940, must have quickened the most sluggish pulse. It was as stirring as the distant sound of the drum itself, when the throb of it can be felt rather than heard. For the man in the street the drum is the very heart and nucleus of martial music; it is that which gives it its irresistible call, sets the small boys marching before the regiment, and makes the elders unconsciously straighten their shoulders. No one would wish to disparage the shrilling fifes or the blare of brass, but, however inspiring in their way, they are but the complements of their leader. Many poets have

fallen under its spell: DRYDEN, THACKERAY, BROWNING, KIPLING, NEWBOLT—there is no end to the list, and certainly not last upon it comes BRET HARTE with the sombre splendour of his refrain

But the drum answered come.

That compelling repetition is as that of the drum itself. It is an onomatopœic charm too of "See the Conquering Hero" that we can only sing "Beat the drums" by dividing "Beat" into three distinct syllables, suggestive of three distinct thumps upon the noble instrument with the last the most vigorous of all. The drum is unquestionably noble, and yet at times, on the eve of a birthday, for instance, it can arouse a less enthusiastic train of thought. When presents for the very young are being considered, the prospect of some thoughtless or cynically humorous uncle giving a drum causes apprehension in the parental heart.

Notice the interposed sentence, "which were lost in France in 1940", encased in commas for the comfort of the reader. Notice in the third sentence an instance, not particularly frequent in modern writing, of the semi-colon. The semi-colon here marks off one statement from its parallel or alternative statement. In that same sentence, too, notice how the commas mark off the various items of an enumeration: "gives it its irresistible call, sets the small boys marching before the regiment, and makes the elders unconsciously straighten their shoulders." You will have observed that, though "and" ushers in the third item of the enumeration, the comma is also there; and this is probably the more helpful practice. Look at this instance:

Although the Oval suggests trams, gasometers, and smoke on the horizon, the men who play for Surrey to-day are the direct inheritors of a tradition which has its roots in the English country-side and the steadfast elms round the village green.

The comma after "gasometers" marks off an item in an enumeration. Contrast with that comma the absence of a stop in "the English country-side and the steadfast elms".

In our first extract we had the adverb "however" marked off as a parenthesis by commas. Contrast the use in this extract where "however" is an adverb to emphasise the adjective "inspiring": a comma between "however" and "inspiring" would clearly be quite out of place.

In the sentence beginning "Many poets" are some noteworthy instances of punctuation. There is the colon ushering in a list. There is the dash where the writer abruptly breaks off his enumeration, saying in effect to his reader "I despair of giving the full list". And there is the resumption, "and certainly not last". Perhaps you would prefer a full-stop after "list". For certainly the sentence has dragged itself loosely along from "Many poets" till it reaches "come".

YOUR EXERCISES

In the sentences below you are asked to supply stops for the purpose indicated at the end of the sentence:

- (i) It was at once a reminder of happy things past and an earnest it may be hoped of happy ones to come. (*Mark off a parenthesis by commas.*)
- (ii) I remember L. at school and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages which I and other of his schoolfellows had not. (*Put a semi-colon between the co-ordinate sentences and a comma before the subordinate sentence.*)
- (iii) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea. (*Put a colon between the two parallel statements and a semi-colon between the co-ordinate sentences.*)
- (iv) Ah *Vanitas Vanitatum* Which of us is happy in this world Which of us has his desire or having it is satisfied Come children let us shut up the box and the puppets

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for our play is played out. (*You need two exclamation marks here ; two question marks ; a question mark and a dash combined, to denote a sudden breaking off and a turn to a new topic ; and two pairs of commas to mark off insertions into the sentence.*)

- (v) You cannot expect justice from a company can you It has neither a soul to lose nor a body to kick. (*You need a comma in each sentence and a question mark after one.*)
- (vi) Good my lord will you see the players well bestowed Do you hear let them be well used for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live. (*You need a question mark here ; a colon in order to introduce an explanation ; a semi-colon before an adverbial clause giving a reason ; and two commas to mark off calls to attention.*)
- (vii) The traffic of Dockland where my omnibus stopped loosened into a Broadway. There the vans and lorries released from the congestion of narrow streets opened out and made speed in an uproar of iron shod wheels and hooves on granite blocks. (*You have in each sentence a parenthesis to be marked off by commas. In the second sentence the writer—H. M. Tomlinson in All Our Yesterdays—has a compound word, its parts joined by a hyphen.*)
- (viii) It happened one day about noon going towards my boat I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a mans naked foot on the shore which was very plain to be seen in the sand I stood like one thunder-struck or as if I had seen an apparition I listened I looked round me I could hear nothing nor see anything I went up to a rising ground to look farther I went up the shore and down the shore but it was all one I could see no other impression but that one I went to it again to see if there were any more and to observe if it might not be my fancy but there was no room for that for there was exactly the very print of a foot toes heel and every part of a foot (*Defoe in his Robinson Crusoe gave great help to his reader by a generous use of stops. Try to supply them in*

the passage above. You will need, in addition to a multitude of commas and six full-stops, two semi-colons, a dash, and the possessive sign.)

- (ix) The start of Old Englands innings was tragic the great Sutcliffe saviour of England in many a hard fought match being leg before wicket. (*You need an apostrophe to mark the possessive case, commas to mark off a numerative absolute, inside which is an apposition also marked off by commas. And there are two compound nouns needing hyphens.*)

ANSWERS

- (i) It was at once a reminder of happy things past and an earnest, it may be hoped, of happy ones to come.
- (ii) I remember L. at school; and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and other of his schoolfellows had not.
- (iii) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.
- (iv) Ah! *Vanitas Vanitatum!* Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied?—Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.
- (v) You cannot expect justice from a company, can you? It has neither a soul to lose, nor a body to kick.
- (vi) Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.
- (vii) The traffic of Dockland, where my omnibus stopped, loosened into a Broadway. There the vans and lorries, released from the congestion of narrow streets, opened

out and made speed in an uproar of iron-shod wheels and hooves on granite blocks.

- (viii) It happened one day, about noon, going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand. I stood like one thunder-struck, or as if I had seen an apparition. I listened, I looked round me, I could hear nothing, nor see anything. I went up to a rising ground, to look farther. I went up the shore, and down the shore, but it was all one; I could see no other impression but that one. I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the very print of a foot—toes, heel, and every part of a foot.
- (ix) The start of Old England's innings was tragic, the great Sutcliffe, saviour of England in many a hard-fought match, being leg-before-wicket.

Study III

EXAMINATION OF GOOD PATTERNS

THE QUESTION

Where shall I find illustrations of modern usage in relation to stops?

THE ANSWER

We had better spend three Studies over this question. We had a few illustrations in the last Study. Look now at the passage of gentle moralising: it is from Lecky's *The Map of Life*:

One of the most important lessons that experience teaches is that on the whole, and in the great majority of cases, success in life depends more on character than on either intellect or fortune. Many brilliant exceptions, no doubt, tend to obscure the rule, and some of the qualities of character that succeed the best may be united with grave vices or defects; but on the whole the law is one that cannot be questioned, and it becomes more and more apparent as civilisation advances. Temperance, industry, integrity, frugality, self-reliance, and self-restraint are the means by which the great masses of men rise from penury to comfort, and it is the nations in which these qualities are most diffused that in the long run are the most prosperous. Chance and circumstance may do much. A happy climate, a fortunate annexation, a favourable vicissitude in the course of commerce, may vastly influence the prosperity of nations; anarchy, agitation, unjust laws, and fraudulent enterprise may offer many opportunities of individual or even of class gains; but ultimately it will be found that the nations in which the solid industrial virtues are most diffused and most respected pass all others in the race. The moral basis of character was the true foundation of the greatness of ancient Rome, and when that foundation was sapped the period of her decadence began. The solid,

parsimonious, and industrious qualities of the French peasantry have given their country the recuperative force which has enabled its greatness to survive the countless follies and extravagances of its rulers.

You had no trouble in gathering the sense of this. Nor would you have missed greatly the stops other than the full-stop at the end of each of the effective sentences. That with the following capital, you feel, is very comforting. You will not have failed to notice, however, these instances of wise punctuation.

1. There are two good examples of antithesis—two complete statements giving contrasted ideas. And the semi-colon intervenes. The first is :

Many brilliant exceptions, no doubt, tend to obscure the rule, and some of the qualities of character that succeed the last may be united with grave vices or defects ; but on the whole the law is one that cannot be questioned, and it becomes more apparent as civilisation advances.

Many modern writers would replace the semi-colon by a full-stop, and let the sentences stand apart for your consideration. *But on the whole* would become *On the whole, however,* or *On the whole, though.* Still, the two statements constitute one idea, and the less weighty stop is preferable.

The second antithesis is expressed in the long sentence beginning *A happy climate.* Here you have a good instance of two co-ordinate sentences separated by a semi-colon ; these are followed by the adversative sentence beginning *but ultimately.* Some writers would prefer the colon after *gains* to the semi-colon, since we already have the semi-colon between the two preceding co-ordinate sentences.

2. There are in the extract three enumerations, the names *temperance, industry, integrity, frugality, self-reliance,* and *self-restraint,* the names *anarchy, agitation, unjust laws,* and *fraudulent enterprise,* and the adjectives *solid, parsimonious,* and *industrious.* In such enumeration the comma before

and is desirable. You omit the comma in such a sentence as "Great Britain and the United States have the same interest in peace and security." You insert the comma in a sentence like "The brothers, Tom, and Fred, were of the one mind upon the plan." The comma after *Tom* asks you to think of at least four persons; for with one comma you might construe the sentence as referring to two persons only.

It may be that a writer in making his enumeration asks you to stay a while and ponder upon each item. He asks you to do this by using the semi-colon, sometimes even the colon, instead of the comma. A good instance is in the long enumeration below beginning *The inexorable flight of time* and summed up in *all these things*.

How large a proportion of the melancholy which is reflected in the poetry of all ages, and which is felt in different degrees in every human soul, is due not to any special or peculiar misfortunes, but to things that are common to the whole human race! The inexorable flight of time; the approach of old age and its infirmities; the shadow of death; the mystery that surrounds our being; the contrast between the depth of affection and the transitoriness and uncertainty of life; the spectacle of the broken lives and baffled aspirations and useless labours and misdirected talents and pernicious energies and long-continued delusions that fill the path of human history; the deep sense of vanity and aimlessness that must sometimes come over us as we contemplate a world in which chance is so often stronger than wisdom; in which desert and reward are so widely separated; in which living beings succeed each other in such a vast and bewildering redundancy—eating, killing, suffering, and dying for no useful discoverable purpose,—all these things belong to the normal lot or to the inevitable setting of human life.

You notice, at the end of the first sentence, the preference for an exclamation mark despite the fact that the sentence is in the form of a question. You notice how the repetition of the conjunction *and* makes an enumeration more im-

pressive, *the spectacle of the broken lives and baffled aspirations and useless labours and misdirected talents and pernicious energies and long-continued delusions.* Read this replacing the first four *and's* by commas, and note the difference in tone.

To conclude this Study examine the punctuation of the sentences below. They all are in *The Map of Life* and each presents something worth noting in the use of stops.

There are few sayings which deserve better to be brought before our minds than that of Franklin: "You value life: then do not squander time, for time is the staff of life."

The colon ushering in the explanation might have given way to a comma. Read Franklin's saying when punctuated thus: "You value life? Then do not squander time; for time is the staff of life." The question mark after *life* asks you so to read the statement *You value life* as to make it equivalent to "Do you value life"?

Overwork, in all departments of life, is commonly bad economy, not so much because it often breaks down health—most of what is attributed to this cause is probably rather due to anxiety than to work—as because it seldom fails to impair the quality of work.

The double dashes ask you to turn aside in order to consider the separate though connected thought, before you link up *not so much because* with *as because*.

The choice of work is one of the great agencies for the management of character in youth. The choice of friends is another. In the words of Burke, "The law of opinion . . . is the strongest principle in the composition of the frame of the human mind, and more of the happiness and unhappiness of man reside in that inward principle than in all external circumstances put together."

The series of full-stops—"leads" (rhyming with "beds") they are sometimes called—asks you to understand that part of the quotation is omitted: it was not necessary to the

purpose of the quoter though, you may be sure, it would not have made the quotation less apt. Notice how very effective a short sentence—*The choice of friends is another*—becomes when following and preceding long sentences. You are in a manner jerked into greater attention. The short crisp sentence must make a deeper impression.

YOUR EXERCISES

Consider carefully the punctuation of this passage from *The Times*, and then answer the questions below it.

BRAVE WORDS

"How wise of you not to attempt the French accent!" Thus the hostess at a play-reading society to a guest who had bent every nerve and sinew to the rendering of her part in Molière. Very generous by comparison was Mr. Griffiths in the House of Commons when he congratulated the Home Secretary on "giving a correct pronounciation to the beautiful Welsh names". This was a compliment that Mr. Morrison will doubtless treasure, for Welsh names, lovely as they are, have been known to administer a series of severe facers. There is something in learning the rules. Much can be acquired, such as the fact that *u*'s and *w*'s are not what they seem, that double *d* is not nearly so obdurate as it looks, and double *f* behaves with a sweet reasonableness, apparently denied to a single one. "But," as Mr. Turveydrop once remarked, "there *are* things," and double *l* asks for more than book-learning. True, there is here a rule. "Put the tip of your lordship's tongue against the roof of your lordship's mouth and hiss like a goose." Such was the recipe alleged to have been given by a Welsh curate to a painstaking English bishop. The first part of it is admirable, but as to the second the bishop would have found the advice to breathe evenly on either side of his tongue easier to follow and more effective. The difficulty however does not end there. If the double *l* comes at the beginning of a name the student can, as it were, take a run at it or, in another sporting metaphor, have a preliminary waggle. It is when it comes in the middle and so must be tackled on the instant and without taking breath that it seems to demand the glorious circumstance of having been

born on the land. If Mr. Morrison came successfully through this ordeal, he is fit to stand before an assembly of bards.

1. Why have the two stops ! " after *accent* ?
2. What stop, besides the comma, would have been suitable after *doubtless treasure* ?
3. What stop might be used to strengthen the comma after *acquired* ?
4. What stop, other than the comma, would be suitable after "there *are* things" ?
5. Punctuate the sentence beginning *The first part* in such a way as to give greater help to a reader.
6. Suggest another comma in the sentence beginning *If the double* ?
7. What is the use of the apostrophes in *u's* and *w's* ?

ANSWERS

1. The ! signifies "an exclamation", not a question ; the " signifies quotation.
2. Semi-colon.
3. The dash. Thus : *acquired,—such*.
4. Semi-colon.
5. The first part of it is admirable ; but, as to the second, the bishop would have found the advice to breathe evenly on either side of his tongue easier to follow and more effective.
6. Comma after *name*.
7. These prevent some possible confusion with words.

Study IV

EXAMINATION OF A PASSAGE

THE QUESTION

How can I become more confident in my use of stops?

THE ANSWER

By far the best way is this : notice the stops with some attention when you read a good passage of prose (or indeed of poetry), and ask yourself from time to time why the writer used such and such a stop. Such questioning by yourself will help you much more than the reading and learning of rules of punctuation. In this and the next Study, for example, examine closely the punctuation of passages varied in kind.

A Piece of an Essay

Here is a little from *The Times* comment upon " WEDNESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 1945 ". That is how *The Times* puts the date ; and you will notice, in passing, that spaces take the place of stops.

" All this while Valentine's Day kept courting pretty May, who sate next him, slipping amorous *billets-doux* under the table." This, according to Elia, was what happened when New Year's coming of age was celebrated by a dinner to which all the days in the year were invited. And the courtship so charmingly begun had a happy ending, for " Valentine and pretty May took their departure together in one of the prettiest silvery twilights a Lover's Day could wish to set in ". Valentine's missives were once compact of the prettiest silvery lace, with lovely intricate folds that opened like the gold and silver flowers of a transformation scene to reveal their innermost secrets. About those that survive there hangs a pleasant

fragrance of old times, but, by comparison with Victorian times, the poor Saint's rites (the books say that there were two saints) are sadly maimed.

The double commas (raised and inverted) before *all* and the double commas (raised but not inverted) after *table* ask you to understand that the writer of the article is quoting another. To usher in his comment he has had recourse to an essay of Charles Lamb's (who was *Elia*).

The raised comma (sometimes called apostrophe) between *e* and *s* in *Valentine's* is the modern way of indicating the possessive case of the noun. Nowadays this apostrophe appears in all possessive nouns; it also appears in shortenings like *o'er* for *over* and *don't* for *do not*.

The little clause, *who sate next him*, inserted as an explanation is marked off by commas.

Billets-doux (love-letters, that is) is in italics since it is a foreign word not yet fully naturalised in English. Perhaps the italics ask you, too, to take the word in a jocular sense.

You notice that a full-stop closes the sentence, and that this full-stop is combined with the commas closing the quotation. *This*, opening the next sentence, begins with a capital letter.

According to Elia is, like the preceding *who sate next him*, a parenthesis marked off by commas. You will find, as an alternative to commas when the interruption is more abrupt, the double bracket (). An instance occurs in the last sentence of the extract. You also find the double dash; and it almost seems a matter of taste which alternative to use. An instance of the latter alternative is in the adjoining column :

Of the additional money £2,000,000—nearly as much as the existing total grant—is to be devoted to general university purposes.

Most writers would, after *ending* in the third sentence, prefer a semi-colon to the comma.

In the last sentence you see *the poor Saint's rites*; the apostrophe in *Saint's* is before the *s*. This asks you to understand that the writer, not being persuaded by what the books say, recognised one Saint only. If he had recognised two, the word would have been written *Saints*'.

An Argument

Now examine this extract from the *Illustrated London News* of the 10th February, 1945. It is written by Arthur Bryant in "Our Note Book":

Though probably few yet suspect the fact, the long dispute between Capitalism and Socialism—it has lasted now for more than a century and in an acute form for nearly thirty years—will probably be resolved before long. It can only end in one of two ways. Either there will be complete, or virtually complete, Socialism as in Russia, or there will be Capitalism strongly tempered by Socialism: in other words, Capitalism subject to Law. The old Liberal and Victorian ideal of Capitalism as untrammelled *laissez-faire* is as dead as the Feudal System or the Court of Queen Elizabeth. We shall never see its like, or anything like it, again. Recalling its social consequences—many of them still with us—few of us want to.

But though this is so, the now classic remedy for economic *laissez-faire*—its complete and totalitarian opposite—is not likely to be adopted in Britain. The British do not want absolute State Socialism because, having seen it abroad, and having, in a mild wartime form, even experienced it at home, they do not like the Totalitarian State. State direction to work does not appeal to them, and when consumer goods begin to be made once more in abundance, I strongly suspect that State choice of consumer goods will appeal to them scarcely more. Unlike the Russians—a people not as yet accustomed to personal economic liberty—the British people are likely to want to choose both their own employments and their own types of tobacco, furnishings, clothing, and the like. And such choice is not compatible with a complete Socialist State. Perfect Socialism will not, I believe, come to England; or, if it does, will come only to be discarded.

You will not have failed to notice in this extract the fondness for parentheses marked off by double dashes : you have two in each paragraph of the extract. Contrast these more impressive brackets with the less weighty ones in a sentence like :

Perfect Socialism will not, I believe, come to England ; or, if it does, will come only to be discarded.

You will have noticed, too, the prevalence of the capital letter for nouns used in a special sense and so in a manner proper nouns. You have *Capitalism*, *Socialism*, *Totalitarian State*, and others.

Notice the use of the colon to usher in an explanation or enlightenment of the preceding statement :

Either there will be complete, or virtually complete, Socialism as in Russia, or there will be Capitalism strongly tempered by Socialism : in other words, Capitalism subject to Law.

A Piece of Talk

Now examine a short conversation piece. It is a little of R. L. Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* :

"I saw Mr. Hyde go in by the old dissecting-room door, Poole," he said. "Is that right when Dr. Jekyll is from home ?"

"Quite right, Mr. Utterson, sir," replied the servant. "Mr. Hyde has a key."

"Your master seems to repose a great deal of trust in that young man, Poole," resumed the other musingly.

"Yes, sir, he do indeed," said Poole. "We have all orders to obey him."

"I do not think I ever met Mr. Hyde ?" asked Utterson,

"Oh dear no, sir, he never *dines* here," replied the butler.

"Indeed, we see very little of him on this side of the house ; he mostly comes and goes by the laboratory."

"Well, good night, Poole."

"Good night, Mr. Utterson."

You notice that the quotation marks are repeated when there

is inserted a phrase like *he said* or *replied the servant*. You notice, too, that, when a complete statement precedes the parenthesis, a full-stop closes the parenthesis and the resumption has a capital letter. Thus *he said*. "*Is that right?*" Compare the sentence below, where an incomplete statement precedes the parenthesis :

"On your side," said Mr. Utterson, "will you do me a favour?"

A comma is the appropriate stop after *Utterson*, and *will* begins with a small letter.

You notice that Stevenson—or his printer—places a full-stop (a period) after the abbreviations *Mr.* and *Dr.* There may be something to be said for omitting the period whenever the abbreviation ends with the same letter as the full word. In Fowler's *Modern English Usage* we are told "We must have *Capt.* for *Captain*, but when we have *Col* (without the period) we learn that the full word ends with *l*; and the knowledge may at times help us in determining for what the alternative stands."

Mr Hyde and *Dr Jekyll* may be better than *Mr. Hyde* and *Dr. Jekyll*. Perhaps, though, we should be consistent and have the period after every abbreviation; and this is the practice of *The Times*: it has *Col. Astor* as well as *Dr. Rhodes*.

You notice that a question mark closes "*I do not think I ever met Mr. Hyde?*" The question mark asks you to understand that the speaker spoke with a rising accent, thereby turning a straight-forward statement into a question.

Good night, in the extract put as two separate words, is found also in the hyphenated form: "One good-night carol more."

The adverb *indeed* in *he do indeed* is not separated from the verb by a comma: we are, therefore, to understand it as an emphasising word. It is separated in the sentence

Indeed, we see very little of him ; we must, therefore, understand the adverb as introducing a surprising statement. *Though you would hardly think so*, is the expansion. Compare the two statements: *He was, indeed, clever (though few would have thought so judging from his looks)* and *He was indeed clever (to a quite exceptional degree clever)*.

In the extract the opening words of each speaker begin a new line. This is usual, though not invariable.

You agree that the quotation marks leave you in no doubt as you assign their words to the several speakers, and that you get the sense of the passage more speedily than you would if they were absent. The helps are not always at your service. Here is a taste of *Tristram Shandy* :

Did ever man, brother *Toby*, cried my father, raising himself upon his elbow, and turning himself round to the opposite of the bed, where my uncle *Toby* was sitting in his old fringed chair, with his chin resting upon his crutch—did ever a poor unfortunate man, brother *Toby*, cried my father, receive so many lashes?—The most I ever saw given, quoth my uncle *Toby*, (ringing the bell at the bed's head for *Trim*) was to a grenadier, I think in *Mackay's* regiment.

Perhaps you didn't feel greatly the lack of quotation marks. You might, indeed, look upon them as an unwarranted intrusion in :

And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Write the passage below and punctuate it in present-day fashion :

I despaired, at first, said the corporal, of being able to bring back to your honour any kind of intelligence concerning the poor sick lieutenant—Is he in the army then ? said my uncle *Toby*—He is, said the corporal—And in what regiment ? said my uncle *Toby*—I'll tell your honour, replied the corporal, every-

thing straight forwards, as I learnt it.—Then, *Trim*, I'll fill another pipe, said my uncle Toby, and not interrupt thee till thou hast done ; so sit down at thy ease, *Trim*, in the window-seat, and begin thy story again. The corporal made his old bow, which generally spoke as plain as a bow could speak it—Your honour is good :—And having done that, he sat down, as he was ordered,—and began the story to my uncle *Toby* over again in pretty near the same words.

2. Insert such commas as are needed for the grouping of words in this paragraph of Jane Austen :

But there certainly are not so many men of large fortune in the world as there are pretty women to deserve them. Miss Ward at the end of half a dozen years found herself obliged to be attached to the Rev. Mr. Norris a friend of her brother-in-law with scarcely any private fortune and Miss Francis fared yet worse. Miss Ward's match indeed when it came to the point was not contemptible Sir Thomas being happily able to give his friend an income in the living of Mansfield and Mr. and Mrs. Norris began their career of conjugal felicity with very little less than a thousand a year. But Miss Frances married in the common phrase to disoblige her family and by fixing on a Lieutenant of Marines without education fortune or connections did it very thoroughly. She could hardly have made a more untoward choice.

ANSWERS

1. "I despaired, at first," said the corporal, "of being able to bring back to your honour any kind of intelligence concerning the poor sick lieutenant."

"Is he in the army then?" said my uncle Toby.

"He is," said the corporal.

"And in what regiment?" said my uncle Toby.

"I'll tell your honour," replied the corporal, "everything straight forwards, as I learnt it."

"Then, *Trim*, I'll fill another pipe," said my uncle Toby, "and not interrupt thee till thou hast done ; so sit down at thy ease, *Trim*, in the window-seat, and begin thy story again."

The corporal made his old bow, which generally spoke

as plain as a bow could speak it, "Your honour is good." And having done that, he sat down, as he was ordered, and began the story to my uncle Toby over again, in pretty near the same words.

2. The commas are needed after *world*, *Ward*, *years*, *Norris*, *brother-in-law*, *fortune*, *match*, *indeed*, *point*, *contemptible*, *Mansfield*, *married*, *phrase*, *family*, *Marines*, *education*, *fortune*, *connections*. [The comma after *world* separates the comparison from the principal statement; the commas after *Ward* and *years* mark off a parenthesis; the commas after *Norris* and *brother-in-law* also mark off a parenthesis, this time a phrase in apposition. You will know this, we hope; and the others are easily explainable.]

Study V

A FURTHER EXAMINATION

THE QUESTION

Will you please continue your examination of passages that are effectively punctuated?

THE ANSWER

Well, look now at two little passages from Robert Browning's poetry, the first difficult, the second quite simple. Consider the use made in these passages of the various stops. The first tells of the making of a song, when the maker's words can hardly keep pace with the thoughts he would express :

On flew the song, a giddy race,
After the flying story ; word made leap
Out word ; rhyme—rhyme ; the lay could barely keep
Pace with the action visibly rushing past :
Both ended.

Perhaps it is well to put this into prose order : " The song flew on after the flying story. It was a giddy race. One word made another word leap out ; one rhyme made another rhyme leap out. The song could barely keep pace with the action that the singer saw rushing past. Both song and action ended."

By his use of semi-colons Browning asks you to combine into one the several thoughts separated, in the prose order, by full-stops. Notice that the insertion, " a giddy race ", marked off by preceding and following commas, is another way of saying " On flew the song after the flying story " : the insertion is an instance of a phrase in apposition. Compare the instances in Shelley's lines : " wild West Wind "

- is "thou breath of Autumn's being" and is also "Thou"
 • with its descriptive clause; and "the leaves dead" are the
 "pestilence-stricken multitudes":

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
 Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes.

Notice, in the Browning passage, the phrase "rhyme—
 rhyme": the dash asks you to supply from the preceding
 phrase "made leap out", and gives you time to do this.
 Compare the similar work of a comma in a sentence like
 this of Herrick's:

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers:
 Of April, May, of June, and July flowers.
 I sing of May-poles, Hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
 Of bride-grooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.

You have no trouble in supplying the missing words.

Lastly, in the Browning passage, notice how the colon
 takes the place of the semi-colon before "Both ended".
 The semi-colon was fitting to separate the items of the
 catalogue; the heavier stop was wanted before the concluding
 and different statement.

The second passage from Browning is Pippa's song: there
 is not the least reason to put this into prose order for its
 understanding:

The year's at the Spring,
 And day's at the morn;
 Morning's at seven;
 The hill-side's dew-pearled:
 The lark's on the wing;
 The snail's on the thorn;
 God's in his heaven—
 All's right with the world!

In "year's", "day's", and the other contractions in the song, the apostrophe asks you to supply the rest of the verb : "the year is", "the day is", and so on. Compare *don't* for "do not" and *isn't* for "is not".

Notice that, in the enumeration, you have a comma only after "spring" but that you also have the conjunction "and". You have, however, a semi-colon after "morn", "seven", "wing", and "thorn". And, where you are asked to make a longer pause in the middle of the song, you have the colon.

Notice the dash : there is the long pause before all the reasons for rejoicing are summed up in the impressive last line ; and notice how that line, which might have been a sober statement ending in a full-stop, is changed into an exclamation of delight by the use of the exclamation stop.

The compound word "dew-pearled" has, you note, the hyphen. It is not written solid, as "bookcase" for instance ; for, in "dew-pearled", we are quite conscious of the sense of the separate words. The compound is the poet's concise way of saying "sparkling with dew as though with pearls".

Have you patience enough to examine closely the punctuation of a third passage ? It is a paragraph from Macaulay's *History of England*. Besides its affording instances of punctuation that you do well to study and to copy, it illustrates how a historian's straying into the region of prophecy may be hazardous :

Many conveniences, which were unknown at Hampton Court and Whitehall in the seventeenth century, are to be found in our modern hotels. Yet on the whole it is certain that the improvement of our houses of public entertainment has by no means kept pace with the improvement of our roads and of our conveyances. Nor is this strange ; for it is evident that, all other circumstances being supposed equal, the inns will be best where the means of locomotion are worst. The quicker the rate of travelling, the less important is it that there should be numerous agreeable resting places for the traveller.

A hundred and sixty years ago a person who came up to the capital from a remote county generally required twelve or fifteen meals, and lodging for five or six nights on the way. If he were a great man, he expected the meals and lodging to be comfortable, and even luxurious. At present we fly from York or Exeter to London by the light of a single winter's day. At present, therefore a traveller seldom interrupts his journey merely for the sake of rest and refreshment. The consequence is that hundreds of excellent inns have fallen into utter decay. In a short time no good houses of that description will be found, except where strangers are likely to be detained by business or pleasure.

In the first sentence you have an instance of a non-defining relative, one that gives you a new fact about its antecedent but does not give the essential quality. This non-defining relative is separated from its antecedent by a comma: "conveniences, which were . . . century, are". Where you have a defining relative, you will not have such a comma. An instance occurs later in the paragraph, "a person *who came up to the capital from a remote county*". The clause in italics defines "person".

Compare these instances from *The Times*: they come from President Roosevelt's report to Congress:

I return from this trip, which took me as far as 7,000 miles from the White House, refreshed and inspired. [The relative clause, non-defining as it is, is marked off by commas.]

The second purpose was to continue to build the foundation for an international accord which would bring order and security after the chaos of war. [The *which* clause defines the "international accord". The comma does not, therefore, come after the antecedent.]

There had developed among all of us a greater facility in negotiating with each other, which augurs well for the future peace of the world. [You notice that *which* is "and this": the clause adds a fact, and the comma appears.]

There were the economic problems common to all the areas which had been liberated from the Nazi yoke. [Again you have *which* introducing a clause defining: the clause answers the question "Which areas do you mean?"]

Perhaps it should be said, however, that the distinction between defining and non-defining relative is not always shown. It seems worth while to maintain the distinction, though. Not so long ago in our language the relative *that* was the defining; *which* or *who* the non-defining relative. Here are some defining relatives :

He today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.
We can scarcely hate anyone that we know.
They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

And here are some non-defining relatives :

Sweet, be not proud of those two eyes,
Which star-like sparkle in their skies.

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said, "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert !

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet.

Go back a while to the Macaulay paragraph. Note the semi-colon before the adverbial clause introduced by the conjunction *for*. Note that the commas mark off the parenthesis, "all other circumstances being supposed equal". And notice the two limbs of the comparison separated by the comma, "The quicker the rate of travelling, the less important". The comma asks you to understand "to that extent" : "the more, the merrier" is in full "to the extent that we are more in number to that extent we shall be merrier".

YOUR EXERCISES

Study the punctuation of the three passages below, and then answer the questions below each passage :

1. I know that the word "planning" is not looked upon with favour in some quarters. In domestic affairs tragic mis-

takes have been made by reason of lack of planning ; and, on the other hand, many great improvements in living, and many benefits to the human race, have been accomplished as a result of adequate intelligent planning—reclamations of desert areas, developments of whole river valleys, provision for adequate housing. The same will be true in relations between nations. For a second time this generation is face to face with the objective of preventing wars. To see that objective the nations of the world will either have a plan or they will not. The groundwork of a plan has now been furnished, and has been submitted to humanity for discussion and decision. No plan is perfect. Whatever is adopted at San Francisco will doubtless have to be amended time and again over the years, just as our own Constitution has been. No one can say exactly how long any plan will last. Peace can endure only so long as humanity really insists upon it, and is willing to work for it and sacrifice for it.

(PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT)

- (a) Why is "planning" so written?
 - (b) Why did President Roosevelt prefer a semi-colon to a full-stop after "*lack of planning*"?
 - (c) Find an instance of a parenthesis marked off by commas.
 - (d) What work has the dash after *intelligent planning*?
2. There are however genuine letters which figure incidentally in the story and are not a mere instrument for telling it. In this realm the claims of MISS AUSTEN deserve consideration. With "*Emma*" at present in the air we think naturally of Frank Churchill's letter to his stepmother explaining and excusing himself. "Only a page more," said Mr. Knightley, who had tried to escape by taking it home with him, "I shall soon have done. What a letter the man writes!" His remark was justified, for a rough calculation shows it to contain at the least 2,500 words. What a letter indeed!
- (A little from *The Times*: the subject is "Long Letters")
- (a) What stops would usually be introduced into the first sentence?

- (b) MISS AUSTEN is in capitals. "Emma" and Frank Churchill only begin with capitals. Why does *The Times* make this distinction?
- (c) Why is there a comma between *Mr. Knightley* and *who*?
- (d) What stop might be substituted for the comma after *justified*?

3. A cab was straightway sent for, and in another half-hour we were in the presence of the courtly little old Mr. Luce, in his chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

He knew the late Mrs. Newcome's handwriting at once. He remembered having seen the little boy at the Hermitage, had talked with Mr. Newcome regarding his son in India, and had even encouraged Mrs. Newcome in her idea of leaving some token of goodwill to the latter. "I was to have dined with grand-mamma on the Saturday, with my poor wife. Why, bless my soul! I remember the circumstances perfectly well, my dear young lady. There can't be a doubt about the letter, but of course the bequest is no bequest at all, and Colonel Newcome has behaved so ill to your brother that I suppose Sir Barnes will not go out of his way to benefit the Colonel."

"What would you do, Mr. Luce?" asks the young lady.

"H'm! And pray why should I tell you what I should do under the circumstances?" replied the little lawyer.

(From THACKERAY'S *The Newcomes*)

- (a) Explain the hyphen in *half-hour*.
- (b) Explain the apostrophe in *Lincoln's Inn Fields*.
- (c) Explain the apostrophe in *can't*.

4. Punctuate this passage:

Yes said the dealer our windfalls are of various kinds some customers are ignorant and then I touch a dividend of my superior knowledge some are dishonest and here he held up the candle so that the light fell strongly on his visitor and in that case he continued I profit by my virtue.

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with 'the mingled

shine and darkness in the shop at these pointed words and before the near presence of the flame he blinked painfully and looked aside.

ANSWERS

1. (a) President Roosevelt wants us to take "planning" in the special sense of Government.
(b) He wishes to have the coming statement to strengthen the first.
(c) "On the other hand."
(d) It ushers in an enumeration.
2. (a) Commas before and after "however".
(b) Miss Austen was a real person; "Emma" and "Frank Churchill" were characters in her novels.
(c) "Who" is a non-defining relative.
(d) A semi-colon might have been better.
3. (a) We realise that both *half* and *hour* are significant words in themselves.
(b) The 's in *Lincoln's* denotes the possessive case.
(c) The apostrophe in *can't* denotes the omitted letters *no*.

4. Stevenson punctuated the passage in this way :

"Yes," said the dealer, "our windfalls are of various kinds. Some customers are ignorant, and then I touch a dividend of my superior knowledge. Some are dishonest," and here he held up the candle so that the light fell strongly on his visitor, "and in that case," he continued, "I profit by my virtue."

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets, and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with the mingled shine and darkness in the shop. At these pointed words, and before the near presence of the flame, he blinked painfully and looked aside.

Study VI

ALTERNATIVES

THE QUESTION

Is there only one correct way of punctuating a sentence ?

THE ANSWER

In the great majority of instances there can hardly be any doubt about what is the best way of punctuating. But there are more ways than one of expressing a thought and of punctuating a sentence, and more than one way may be quite correct.

You have realised that a thought may be put into more than one form of words. You have also realised that the one form of words may be punctuated in more than one way. A playwright may, for instance, be more concerned about showing how he thinks his sentences should be pronounced than about the syntax of these sentences. And, maybe as a result of the playwright's directions, the player's method of grouping the words may displease the school-master :

"And how did *Garrick* speak the soliloquy last night ?"
"Oh, against all rule, my lord,—most ungrammatically ! Betwixt the nominative case, which your lordship knows should govern the verb, he suspended his voice in the epilogue a dozen times, three seconds and three-fifths by a stop-watch, my lord, each time."—"Admirable grammarian !—But in suspending his voice—was the sense suspended likewise ? Did no expression of attitude or countenance fill up the chasm ?—Was the eye silent ? Did you narrowly look ?"—"I looked only at the stop-watch, my lord."

Well now, play with a number of sentences ; try for yourself the effect of varying the punctuation. The play will not

only make your punctuation more effective, but will also make greater your command over English. Here as a start is the opening line of Gray's poem :

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.

What would be the effect of a comma after *tolls* ? The comma asks you to interpret *the knell of parting day* as a parallel to *The curfew tolls* rather than as the object of the transitive verb *tolls*. Does the added comma, as some suggest it does, make the line more impressive, more arresting ?

Examine a couple of sentences from Professor Bradley's lecture on *Antony and Cleopatra*. Here are the ingredients of the first of the sentences : *Antony was the first of living soldiers. Antony was an able politician. Antony was a most persuasive orator. Nevertheless, Antony was not born to rule the world.* See how well these fragments are compacted into the sentence :

The first of living soldiers, an able politician, a most persuasive orator, Antony nevertheless was not born to rule the world.

Here are the ingredients of the second sentence : *In every moment of his absence a siren music in his blood is singing him back to her. The music is doing this whether he wake or sleep. To this music the soul within him leans and listens. It does so however he may be occupied.* Try to combine those ingredients into a well-built sentence, and then compare your version with Professor Bradley's :

In every moment of his absence, whether he wake or sleep, a siren music in his blood is singing him back to her ; and to this music, however he may be occupied, the soul within him leans and listens.

Examine the build of a longer extract. The writer comments upon the defeat of a great Rugby fifteen after a long

stretch of victories. How open the comment? Perhaps the best way is a quotation upon the fading nature of human glory. Well, Prince Florizel (in Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights*) had a saying about all things coming to an end. And Prince Florizel could make commonplace truths sound very imposing. Here is the combination:

"All things come to an end," exclaimed Prince Florizel, who had to perfection the knack of magnificent platitude, "the evil with the good; pestilence as well as beautiful music."

There are other ways of putting the same thought:

"Vell, gov'ner," said a more homely philosopher, "we must all come to it one day or another."

Now, you will feel sympathy for Coventry's fifteen who for so long had stood against the onslaught of their opponents. How you express that sympathy depends upon your taste. Here is the combination of the two thoughts:

It is in some such terms as these, according to individual taste, that sympathy will be administered to Coventry's heroic fifteen.

Here are the facts to be welded into one sentence: *They had been for three years without a defeat. They had won seventy-two matches in succession. At last St. Mary's Hospital beat them. St. Mary's Hospital were worthy conquerors.*

These facts, the writer thinks, are best put as a contrast, the semi-colon being interposed between the two components of the contrast:

For over three years they had kept their shield unsmirched and won seventy-two consecutive matches; then at last they went down before no unworthy conquerors in St. Mary's Hospital.

Doubtless you will say that the four sentences together are more entertaining without the usherings than with them:

"All things come to an end," exclaimed Prince Florizel, who had to perfection the knack of magnificent platitude, "the evil with the good; pestilence as well as beautiful music." "Vell, guv'nor," said a more homely philosopher, "we must all come to it one day or another." It is in some such terms as these, according to individual taste, that sympathy will be administered to Coventry's heroic fifteen. For over three years they had kept their shield unsmirched and won seventy-two consecutive matches; then at last they went down before no unworthy conquerors in St. Mary's Hospital.

President Roosevelt in an inaugural address spoke of many things to be remedied in his country. Here are the thoughts that make up a paragraph of three sentences:

I paint the picture not in despair. I paint it in hope. The nation purposes to paint it out. The nation purposes this because it has seen and understood the injustice of it. It is not a test of our progress that we add more to the abundance of those who have much. The test is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

You agree that the first two thoughts are so closely linked that no stop should intervene between them. You will agree, too, that the fourth sentence may well come into the structure of the third. And you will agree that the last two sentences are best presented as an antithesis. Well, here is the paragraph:

I paint the picture not in despair but in hope. For the nation, seeing and understanding the injustice of it, purposes to paint it out. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

Examine a few debatable points: the sentences concerned are in a single article of *The Times*. We have:

But however the decision of the Senate may go it should not be imagined that the debate will thus be ended.

Would it conduce to the comfort of the reader if the parenthesis were marked off by commas? Thus:

But, however the decision of the Senate may go, it should not be imagined that the debate will thus be ended.

We have :

In the Roosevelt Administration, Mr. Wallace has represented the left wing of the party, Mr. Jones the extreme right.

Would it be better to omit the commas, and introduce a conjunction ? Thus :

In the Roosevelt Administration Mr. Wallace has represented the left wing of the party and Mr. Jones the extreme right.

We have :

In Mr. Wallace's view, the money power of the Government must be made to work for full employment by shouldering the abnormal risks of private enterprise, by backing the small business man, and by financing public works.

Suppose we eliminate the first comma, and make the several plans stand out more. Have we given over-emphasis to the schemes ? Thus :

In Mr. Wallace's view the money power of the Government must be made to work for full employment ; it must shoulder the abnormal risks of private enterprise ; it must back the small business man ; and it must finance public works.

You notice that in the corresponding sentence there is no comma :

It is Mr. Jones's contention that the Government's great investment resources should not be placed under the supervision of a man "willing to jeopardise the country's future with untried ideas and idealistic schemes".

Notice the modern way of showing the possessive even with nouns ending in *s*—*Mr. Jones's*—the addition of the apostrophe and the *s* too. The quotation marks before *willing* and after *schemes* ask you to understand that between them comes what Mr. Jones deplores in Mr. Wallace.

For our last example examine this long sentence :

The debate involves all those mighty issues which agitate men's minds when they look forward to the world after the war—the true function of government in a democratic State ; the yearning to be rid of the scourge of unemployment ; the conflict between the social conscience and the nostalgia for the old ways ; the strenuous attempt to reconcile freedom and control, to prevent the one from becoming self-destructive and the other from becoming tyrannical.

Would it be more comfortable for the reader to break this up and give him breathing spaces ? Would it be, do you think, as effective in its broken-up form ? Thus :

The debate involves all those mighty issues which agitate men's minds when they look forward to the world after the war. There is the question of the true function of government in a democratic State. There is the yearning to be rid of the scourge of unemployment. There is the conflict between the social conscience and the nostalgia for the old ways. And there is the strenuous attempt to reconcile freedom and control, to prevent the one from being self-destructive and the other from becoming tyrannical.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Here are two separate sentences :

Poverty is no disgrace to a man. Poverty, however, is very inconvenient.

Make them into a compound sentence using the conjunction *but*.

2. Here are four statements :

To found a great empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers, was the project. At first sight this may appear a project fit only for a nation of shopkeepers. It is, however, a project altogether unfit for a nation of shopkeepers. But it is extremely fit for a nation that is governed by shopkeepers.

Write these as two sentences.

3. These are the ingredients in a Thomas Hardy's sentence :

There were a thousand young-fir trees to be planted in a neighbouring spot. This had been cleared by the wood-cutters. He had arranged to plant them with his own hands.

Write the sentence using a comma.

4. Weld these sentences into one. A comma is the only stop needed : you will turn " this resulted " into the present participle " resulting ".

Winterborne's fingers were endowed with a gentle conjuror's touch in spreading the roots of each little tree. This resulted in a sort of caress. Under the caress the delicate fibres laid themselves out in their proper directions for growth.

5. Build these separate sentences into one :

He put most of these roots towards the south-west. The reason was, he said, this. In forty years' time, when some great gale is blowing from that quarter, the trees will require the strongest holdfast on that side. They will require it in order to stand against the gale and not fall.

6. Make these three sentences into one. You need to use contrasting conjunction " but " :

The Puritan hated bear-baiting. The Puritan did not hate it because it gave pain to the bear. The Puritan hated it because it gave pleasure to the spectators.

ANSWERS

1. Poverty is no disgrace to a man, but it is very inconvenient.
2. To found a great empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers, may at first sight appear a project fit only for a nation of shopkeepers. It is, however, a project altogether unfit for a nation of shopkeepers ; but extremely fit for a nation that is governed by shopkeepers.

(Notice that in the first sentence the subject—which is " To found a great empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers "—is separated from its predicate

by a comma. This may not be defensible in grammar, but it makes for ease in reading.)

3. There were a thousand young fir trees to be planted in a neighbouring spot which had been cleared by the woodcutters, and he had arranged to plant them with his own hands.
4. Winterborne's fingers were endowed with a gentle conjuror's touch in spreading the roots of each little tree, resulting in a sort of caress under which the delicate fibres all laid themselves out in their proper directions for growth.
5. He put most of these roots towards the south-west ; for, he said, in forty years' time, when some great gale is blowing from that quarter, the trees will require the strongest holdfast on that side to stand against it and not fall.
6. The Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.

Study VII

THE COMMA

THE QUESTION

What are the uses of the comma?

THE ANSWER

You are often called upon to use a comma. We may, therefore, well spend our time in studying that use.

The comma marks off the smallest members of a sentence, helping us, therefore, to group words as the writer intended these to be grouped. Look at this opening of a tale by Robert L. Stevenson :

The mill where Will lived with his adopted parents stood in a falling valley between pine-woods and great mountains. Above, hill after hill soared upwards until they soared out of the depth of the hardest timber, and stood naked against the sky. Some way up, a long grey village lay like a seam or a rag of vapour on a wooded hillside ; and, when the wind was favourable, the sound of the church bells would drop down, thin and silvery, to Will. Below, the valley grew ever steeper and steeper, and at the same time widened out on either hand.

You have no trouble in grouping the words of the first sentence, even though helping commas are absent. If, however, you had no comma after "Above", in the second sentence, you might for a little while mistake the adverb for a preposition. ("Below", in the last sentence, is another instance). The clause, "when the wind was favourable", is an expansion of the adverb "sometimes", and asks for the commas before and after. Notice how the phrase, "thin and silvery", a kind of insertion (or parenthesis) into the sentence, is marked off by commas. In two instances (after "timber" and "steeper") the commas separate for you one

connected sentence from the other. But notice that no comma precedes "and" in "steeper and steeper".

You have noticed that it is not every slight pause that is marked; a writer looks to you for some amount of skill in grouping his words. When, as does sometimes happen, a writer overstops his writing, you very likely feel a little irritated by the want of reliance upon your power to interpret. Here, for instance, are the opening sentences of Mary Webb's fine novel, *The House in Dormer Forest*. She is speaking of the owls that lived about the House:

On a moonlit night, passing, high up, from side to side of the cup-like valley, they looked like breeze-blown feathers. Higher still, on the very rim of the cup, the far-travelled winds shouted across to one another, all winter, news of the world.

Very likely you would dispense with the commas before and after "high up" and those before and after "all winter". (See Appendix.)

Here is a summary of the uses of the comma:

1. *The comma marks off phrases in apposition.* Thus, in the sentence

He was the contemporary and friend of Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Spencer, men of great learning and merit, and famous in their generation.

The phrase between the commas breaks into the statement so that information may be given about the two doctors. When, however, the words in apposition are so closely connected that they are in effect a single term, we do not insert a stop. We should hardly think of inserting a stop between "daughter" and "Joan" in the sentence

The wife provided for him was her daughter Joan, who brought him neither beauty nor portion.

Look at a second sentence:

The historic city of Odessa, the chief harbour of the Black Sea, has gained added associations for Russian patriots by its heroic defence for three months.

Notice the comma after *Odessa* and *Sea*.

Look at a third sentence. In this the subject, "the divine unrest" is separate from the predicate, "inspired and supported" by three phrases putting in an alternative way "the divine unrest":

The divine unrest, that old stinging trouble of humanity that makes all high achievements and all miserable failures, the same that spread wings with Icarus, the same that sent Columbus into the desolate Atlantic, inspired and supported those barbarians on their perilous march.

2. *A word or a phrase in parenthesis may be marked off by commas.* Thus—

He behaved himself, as St. Paul advises a minister, with much patience.

They order, said I, this matter better in France.

The fact, however, that the enemy planned to withdraw, does not entitle him to say that he has withdrawn according to plan.

[Notice the marking off of "however", and contrast such sentences as "However you came to know it, answer me" and "However little he does, he takes his salary": in such sentences "however" is an integral part of its sentence.]

3. *A nominative of address, being an exclamation calling for attention and not really a part of the sentence, is marked off by a comma.* Thus—

Good tutor, I am sorry your lot is fallen in no better ground.

Brothers, I am sorry I have no Morrison's Pill for curing the maladies of Society.

4. *The comma is used in enumerations and ellipses.*

When we enumerate many things together, we do not usually insert the conjunction *and* between the members of the series. To denote the omission—the *ellipsis*, as it is sometimes called—we use a comma—

By this marriage the good man was drawn from the tranquillity of his college; from that garden of piety, of pleasure,

of peace and a sweet conversation, into the thorny wilderness of a busy world.

The several prepositional phrases descriptive of *garden*, with the exception of the last pair, are separated by commas ; the conjunction after *peace* renders a comma unnecessary.

We must note, however, that there is a growing preference in such enumerations for a comma, even though *and* is there. Such is the practice of *The Times*.

In cases other than enumerations, the comma denotes the ellipsis of a word or words. Thus—

Histories make men wise ; poets, witty ; the mathematics, subtle ; natural philosophy, deep ; moral, grave ; logic and rhetoric, able to contend.

Here Bacon, with his love of condensed statement, instead of repeating *make men* throughout this series of co-ordinate sentences, indicates by his use of the comma a pause during which the hearer may himself supply the words.

5. *Commas sometimes separate subordinate clauses from their principal.* Thus—

It will be acknowledged even by those that practise it not, that clear and sound dealing is the honour of man's nature.

[The noun clause, *that . . . nature*, is in apposition with the introducing Pronoun *it*.]

When bad men combine, the good must associate.

[Adverbial clause, *when bad men combine*, separated from principal clause, *the good must associate*.]

Government is not made in virtue of natural rights, which may and do exist in total independence of it.

[Adjectival clause separated.]

Here, as elsewhere in our writing, rigid rules are of little value. Judgement is needed : if the insertion of a comma adds to clearness, then the stop should be inserted. But we are not to suppose that every slight pause justifies a stop.

In particular, when an Adjectival Clause simply completes a term, the commas are not called for. Thus—

The evil *that men do* lives after them.

6. *At times, and with great help to readers, the comma marks off the subject (when that subject consists of many words) from its predicate.* In the sentence below, for example, logic objects to the comma after *place*. But ease welcomes the comma :

It is a maxim, that those to whom everybody allows the second place, have an undoubted title to the first.

[The subject separated from its predicate is “those to whom everybody allows the second place”. The comma analyses for you the sentence into its elements and thereby gives you easier access to the writer’s meaning.]

Look at these two instances from Trevelyan’s *History of England* :

To regard “enclosure” of open land by permanent walls and hedges as a thing invariably or even usually bad in itself, would be to misinterpret the whole history of British agriculture.

[There again, the comma after “itself” comes between subject and predicate, but we welcome it.]

Gradually the distinction between the able-bodied who would not work, the aged and feeble who could not work, and the unfortunate who could not find work, became clear to Tudor society, and took its place in the Poor Law.

[Note the comma before the verb “became”.]

Look at these other two instances :

The rhythmical stride, the pale, unshaven faces tanned about the eyes, the discoloured regimentals and the tattered flags, filled him with a sense of weariness, pity, and wonder.

[Note the comma after “flags” : ask yourself whether it helps to ready interpretation.]

Tom Birch is as brisk as a bee in conversation, but no sooner does he take a pen in his hands, than it becomes a torpedo to him, and benumbs all his faculties. .

[The comma after *hands* may not be justifiable in logic, but it helps towards easy interpretation.]

YOUR EXERCISES

1. You are asked to supply the omitted commas : the paragraph is from Froude's *History of England* :

For indeed a change was coming upon the world the meaning and direction of which even still is hidden from us a change from era to era. The paths trodden by the footsteps of ages were broken up ; old things were passing away and the faith and the life of ten centuries were dissolving like a dream. Chivalry was dying ; the abbey and the castle were soon together to crumble into ruins ; and all the forms desires beliefs convictions of the old world were passing away never to return. A new continent had risen up beyond the western sea. The floor of heaven inlaid with stars had sunk back into an infinite abyss of immeasurable space ; and the firm earth itself unfixed from its foundations was seen to be but a small atom in the awful vastness of the universe.

2. Give what you think the reason for each comma in the sentences :

- (1) I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble,

Most obedient servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

- (2) My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs.
- (3) Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more.
- (4) Sir, it is a great thing to dine with the Canons of Christ Church.
- (5) A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table, than when his wife talks Greek.
- (6) Jog on, jog on the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a,

- A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.
- (7) To be wise and love, exceeds man's might.
 - (8) The capacity of the British worker, in all occupations and at all grades, has never been in doubt.
 - (9) Before the war a programme involving a capital expenditure of some £12,000,000 was being planned to increase and modernise the provision of technical, commercial, and art colleges.
 - (10) For all practical purposes, however, they have gained their point: Their own entry, therefore, into a reconstructed Government ought not to be withheld.
 - (11) Parties may refer a pure question of law to an arbitrator, either legal or lay.
 - (12) My Lords, Parliament can do anything; and I hope that judicially I shall never be other than obedient to its directions, whatever, when they are clearly expressed, these directions may be.
 - (13) His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "This was a man."

3. Experts on the "Establishment of an International Monetary Fund" advised

the elimination of foreign exchange restrictions which hamper the growth of foreign trade.

No comma appears after *restrictions*; and doubt was as to whether the omission was intended. Explain what difference the insertion of a comma would make.

ANSWERS

1. The Froude passage is punctuated in this way:

For, indeed, a change was coming upon the world, the meaning and direction of which even still is hidden from us, a change from era to era. The paths trodden by the footsteps of ages were broken up; old things were passing away, and the faith and the life of ten centuries were dissolving like a dream. Chivalry was dying; the abbey and the castle were soon together to crumble into ruins; and all the forms, desires, beliefs, convictions of the old world were passing away, never

to return. A new continent had risen up beyond the western sea. The floor of heaven, inlaid with stars, had sunk back into an infinite abyss of immeasurable space; and the firm earth itself, unfixed from its foundations, was seen to be but a small atom in the awful vastness of the universe.

2. [You will find the reasons in the Study. These sentences are additional instances of the use.]

3. The passage, as it stands without the comma, suggests that some restrictions do not hamper foreign trade and need not, therefore, be eliminated. With the comma the implication is that every restriction is a hamper to foreign trade.

Study VIII

PUTTING IN THE COMMAS

THE QUESTION

When to use a comma gives a good deal of trouble ; are there any rules upon the matter ?

THE ANSWER

There are no infallible rules. Nor is there a great deal of consistency among writers.

Examine for a while the occurrence of commas, remembering always that not every slight pause in a sentence needs to be marked.

You have this sentence,

(a) Russia has however problems of its own to face.

The adverb *however* can well stand without attendant commas ; no reader will be upset by the omission. There is, you agree, nothing against,

(b) Russia has, however, problems of its own to face.

One thing we must guard against, and that is to leave out one comma : either none or two, but never one. Either have (a) or (b) but never

Russia has, however problems of its own to face.

Here is a quite long sentence :

Rationing guarantees fair dealing in short supplies between rich and poor, and reasonable and constructive controls are indispensable not merely for the protection of the individual's purchasing power but also for the establishment of the agreed and desired partnership between State and industry and for the most rapid and effective reinstatement and enlargement of peace-time production.

In this sentence, taken from a *Times* leader, there is but one comma. There might have been commas after *indispensable*, *power*, and *industry*. But the sentence is so well-girt that the paucity of stops causes no obstacle to your ready understanding.

Here is another sentence where the writer contents himself with the ending full-stop :

If there is one assurance calculated to promote national confidence and the national effort it is that the nation's inventive and organising power will be as fully deployed as its physical energies.

We might have had a comma after *effort* ; but again the sentence is so well-built that we are not troubled by the omission.

You could not, though, dispense with the commas in the sentence :

Far-sighted party men will accept as prudent, and citizens not of the party will welcome as public-spirited, his declaration that he will " seek the aid not only of Conservatives but of men of good will of any party or no party "—a move long thought to be probable.

Leave out the commas after *prudent* and *public-spirited*, and there results a measure of hesitation in grouping the words as the writer intended them to be grouped. A comma after *party* might have been sufficient before the afterthought ; but, probably wisely, the writer wished for a more impressive pause.

Nor could you dispense with the commas sprinkled over these two sentences :

Moreover, if this Government is entrusted with responsibility by the electorate it will be " further reformed " for the tasks of victory and peace. Some highly interesting and important contingencies, affecting persons and parties, are opened up in the prospect, and they supply a further reason why this particular election, conducted as it ought to be with the full mutual opposition of party claims, should avoid the

wilder forms of combat which, over most of the field, must in any event be artificial.

The comma after *moreover*, the adverb indicating that the argument is to be resumed, we must have. Less impulsive reasoners would also place a comma after *electorate*, but we need not lament its absence. The commas after *contingencies* and *parties* are interesting. They ask the reader to pause awhile and consider the bearing of Mr. Churchill's declaration not only upon individuals but upon political parties. The commas after *election* and *claims*, and those after *which* and *field*, are very desirable as marking off the interpolated phrases. These phrases, you note, break into the structure of the sentence :

This particular election should avoid the wilder forms of combat which must in any event be artificial.

Consider now where the commas are desirable in a passage different from the argumentative sentences above. It is a little of Thackeray's narrative prose :

As Esmond and the Dean walked away from Kensington discoursing of this tragedy and how fatal it was to the cause which they both had at heart the street-criers were already out with their broadsides shouting through the town the full true and horrible account of the death of Lord Mohun and Duke Hamilton in a duel. A fellow had got to Kensington and was crying it in the square there at very early morning when Mr. Esmond happened to pass by. He drove the man from under Beatrix's very window whereof the casement had been set open. The sun was shining though 'twas November : he had seen the market-carts rolling into London the guard relieved at the palace the labourers trudging to their work in the gardens between Kensington and the City—the wandering merchants and hawkers filling the air with their cries. The world was going to its business again although dukes lay dead and ladies mourned for them ; and kings very likely lost their chances. So night and day pass away and tomorrow comes and our place knows us not. Esmond thought of the courier now galloping on the north road to inform him who was Earl

of Arran yesterday that he was Duke of Hamilton today and of a thousand great schemes hopes ambitions that were alive in the gallant heart beating a few hours since and now in a little dust quiescent.

Very likely you have little difficulty in deciding where commas are needed. They come in Thackeray after *tragedy, heart, broadsides, full, true, Kensington, morning, window, London, palace, again, kings, likely, away, comes, corner, him, yesterday, today, schemes, hopes, ambitions, heart, since*. A few noteworthy points there are. In some editions a semi-colon stands for a comma after *heart*, but perhaps the comma is better. You notice that a dash after *City* serves as a substitute for the comma in the enumeration.

Note a similar use of the dashes in this sentence of Macaulay's, where it was apparent that the commas were too light :

The circumstances which have most influence on the happiness of mankind—the changes of manners and morals, the transition of communities from poverty to wealth, from ignorance to knowledge, from ferocity to humanity—these are, for the most part, noiseless revolutions.

Inside the weightier dashes the commas mark off the several items of the enumeration. Notice how the demonstrative pronoun *these* is inserted to sum up the circumstances enumerated.

Now consider the parenthesis a little further so far as regards its punctuation. At times it hardly calls for a stop. This sentence, for example, is complete :

Chance made me the tenant of a windmill.

You insert an adverb, *recently*, and a prepositional phrase, *for a while*, without feeling called upon to use stops, even commas :

Chance recently made me for a while the tenant of a windmill.

In other instances, however, you feel that stops, commas or

dashes or brackets, will help towards the interpretation of your sentence.

This sentence, for instance, runs with even flow from beginning to end :

The young lad began singing a snatch of a song.

So does this :

He had a heightened colour and voice.

We make a single sentence of the two by inserting a prepositional phrase into the first.

The young lad, with a heightened colour and voice, began singing a snatch of a song.

The insertion is here marked off by commas. A longer insertion, making a more abrupt break into the even flow of the sentence, may be marked off by dashes, or by brackets. Examples are :

If my friend and I eat your cakes—for which we have neither of us natural inclination—we shall expect you to join us at supper by way of recompense.

Although our troops made the attack with unparalleled courage and fury,—rushing up to the very guns of the enemy, and being slaughtered before their works,—we were driven back many times.

[The writer felt that the commas were inadequate to mark so decided a break, and he strengthened each by a dash.]

In this instance, too, from *Hamlet*, the dash reinforces the comma at the beginning and the end of the parenthesis.

Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,—
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns,—puzzles the will

“Not at home,” says one of Thackeray’s footmen; “the family ’ave gone up the Rind.” A century ago, say in 1845,

going up the Rhine was a fashionable adventure for the best families in England—the author of “The Kickleburys on the Rhine” is full of references to it—and it was gone up by steamboat, then still something of a novelty.

[Notice the parentheses and the varied ways of marking them off. The first, *says one of Thackeray's footmen*, has the comma in front, the semi-colon at the end. The footman's announcement would be :

“Not at home ; the family 'ave gone up the Rind.”

The second insertion, *say in 1845*, is adequately marked off by commas. The third, *the author . . . references to it*, needs the weightier dashes.]

Instances where brackets take the place of dashes are :

One risks his life (and his honour, too, sometimes) against a bundle of bank-notes, or a yard of blue riband.

As soon as ever Esmond was dressed (and he had been awake long before the town), he took a coach for Kensington.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Examine the sentences below and insert such commas as you think needed :

- (a) Sir Roger told them with the air of a man who would not give his judgement rashly that much might be said on both sides.
- (b) I remember when our whole island was shaken with an earthquake some years ago there was an impudent mountebank who sold pills which (as he told the country people) were very good against an earthquake.
- (c) Because half-a-dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink whilst thousands of great cattle reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak chew the cud and are silent pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field ; that of course they are many in number ; or that after all they are other than the little shrivelled meagre

hopping though loud and troublesome *insects* of the hour.

- (d) "It is," says Chadband "the ray of rays the sun of suns the moon of moons the star of stars. It is the light of Terewth."
- (e) Annual income twenty pounds annual expenditure nineteen nineteen result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six result misery.
- (f) It was at Rome on the 15th October 1764 as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind.
- (g) Good people all of every sort
Give ear unto my song!
And if you find it wondrous short
It cannot hold you long.

2. Mark off the groups of words by commas and place the quotation marks about the actual words of the speaker in

When the day that he must hence was come many accompanied him to the river side into which as he went he said Death where is thy sting? And as he went down deeper he said Grave where is thy victory? So he passed over and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

3. Which of the two versions below seems the better? —

- (i) Behold! a voice crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord".
- (ii) Behold! a voice crying, "In the wilderness make straight the way of the Lord".

ANSWERS

1. (a) Commas after *them* and *rashly*.
(b) Commas after *remember* and *ago*.

- (c) Commas after *chink, cattle, oak, silent, course, that, all, little, shrivelled, meagre, hopping.*
- (d) Commas after *is, Chadband, rays, suns, moons.*
- (e) Commas after *pounds, nineteen, pounds, six.*
- (f) Commas after *Rome, October, 1764, Capitol, Jupiter.*
- (g) Commas after *all, sort, short.*

2. When the day that he must hence was come, many accompanied him to the river side, into which as he went he said, "Death, where is thy sting?" And, as he went down deeper, he said, "Grave, where is thy victory?" So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

3. The second version is favoured by modern scholars.

Study IX

ENDING OF A SENTENCE

THE QUESTION

What stop is called for at the end of a sentence?

THE ANSWER

A sentence is the expression in words of a statement, or a question, or a command, or an exclamation. The stop that marks its end depends upon the nature of the sentence. The vast majority of sentences are statements made about a subject; and a full-stop (or period) is then the appropriate stop. Such statements range from a few words to the paragraph-heap that you may find in our older writers; and they are of varied structure. Instances are:

- (i) Astonished grief had swept over the country. [A Simple Sentence.]
- (ii) When, two days previously, the news of the approaching end had been made public, astonished grief had swept over the country. [This is a Complex Sentence. The additional, or subordinate part,—“when, two days previously, the news of the approaching end had been made public”,—is an Adverbial Clause of Time.]
- (iii) That they were about to lose her appeared a scarcely possible thought. [This, too, is a Complex Sentence. The statement, “That they were about to lose her”, serves as the Subject of the Predicate, “appeared a scarcely possible thought”.]
- (iv) So, taking care not to tread on the grass, we will go along the straight walk to the west front, and there stand for a while, looking up at its deep-pivoted porches. [This is a Compound Sentence. Two sentences are joined by the Conjunction “and”.]

The first three sentences are from Lytton Strachey's

Queen Victoria, the fourth from Ruskin. The full—that is, complete—stop denotes a decided pause. The writer has made his statement, or asked his question, or given his command; and the reader's mind rests upon it before reading on. You may, indeed, find a series of ejaculations marked off by full-stops:

Simply gorgeous. Adeline playing superbly. Audiences thrilled by her.

Possibly the idea is that such a series of mere suggestions of thoughts is sprightly reading, and that readers delight in filling out the hints. Perhaps, though, you do well to reserve your full-stop for the end of a real statement.

The modern tendency is towards the short sentence. But you need not strive unduly after short sentences; you are entitled to some amount of mental exertion from your readers, and they are able to give it. They are not like the undying men described in *Gulliver's Travels*: "They never can amuse themselves with reading, because their memory will not serve to carry them from the beginning of the sentence to the end; and by this defect they are deprived of the only entertainment whereof they might otherwise be capable."

The full-stop is replaced by the question mark—the note of interrogation, it is sometimes called—after a *direct* question. Look at the instances in this little extract from Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*:

Young Castlewood came clambering over the stalls before the clergy were fairly gone, and, running up to Esmond, eagerly embraced him. "My dear, dearest old Harry," he said, "are you come back? Have you been to the wars? You'll take me with you when you go again? Why didn't you write to us? Come to Mother."

You notice that the third instance, "You'll take me with you when you go again?" is a question, though in the form of a statement.

The exclamation mark—called sometimes mark of Admiration—is appropriate for real exclamations : it is not appropriate, though often used, as a means of emphasis. Look at the instances in this passage, also from *Henry Esmond* where the stop is rightly used :

Might she sleep in peace—might she sleep in peace ; and we, too, when our struggles and pain are over ! But the earth is the Lord's, as the heaven is ; we are alike His creatures, here and yonder. I took a little flower off the hillock, and kissed it, and went my way, like the bird that had just lighted on the cross by me, back into the world again. Silent receptacle of death ! tranquil depth of calm, out of reach of tempest and trouble ! I felt as one who had been walking below the sea, and treading amidst the bones of shipwrecks.

We consider the question mark and the exclamation mark in a later Study. To end this Study, will you read with care this extract from Robert Burton ? You will thoroughly enjoy it. In his curiously named *Anatomy of Melancholy* he is speaking on the theme “ Rewards do not always go to the deserving ”. Consider whether you would put the full-stops where Burton has put them.

Yet be not discouraged (O my well-deserving spirits) with this which I have said, it may be otherwise, though seldom I confess, yet sometimes it is. But to your further content, I'll tell you a tale. In Moronia Pia, or Moronia Felix, I know not whether, nor how long since, nor in what cathedral church, a fat prebend fell void. The carcass scarce cold, many suitors were up in an instant. The first had rich friends, a good purse, and he was resolved to outbid any man before he would lose it, every man supposed he should carry it. The second was my lord bishop's chaplain (in whose gift it was), and he thought it his due to have it. The third was nobly born, and he meant to get it by his great parents, patrons, and allies. The fourth stood upon his worth, he had newly found out strange mysteries in chemistry, and other rare inventions, which he would detect to the public good. The fifth was a painful preacher, and he was commended by the whole parish where he dwelt, he had all their hands to his certificate. The sixth

was the prebendary's son lately deceased, his father died in debt (for it, as they say) and left a wife and many poor children. The seventh stood upon fair promises, which to him and his noble friends had been formerly made for the next place in his lordship's gift. The eighth pretended great losses, and what he had suffered for the Church, what pains he had taken at home and abroad, and besides, he brought noblemen's letters. The ninth had married a kinswoman, and he sent his wife to sue for him. The tenth was a foreign doctor, a late convert, and wanted means. The eleventh would exchange for another, he did not like the former's site, could not agree with his neighbours and fellows upon any terms, he would be gone. The twelfth and last was (a suitor in conceit) a right honest, civil, sober man, an excellent scholar, and such a one as lived private in the university, but he had neither means nor money to compass it; besides he hated all such courses, he could not speak for himself, neither had he any friends to solicit his cause, and therefore made no suit, could not expect, neither did he hope for, or look after it. The good bishop, amongst a jury of competitors thus perplexed, and not yet resolved what to do or on whom to bestow it, at the last, of his own accord, mere motion, and bountiful nature, gave it freely to the university student, altogether unknown to him but by fame; and to be brief, the academical scholar had the prebend sent him for a present. The news was no sooner published abroad, but all good students rejoiced, and were much cheered up with it, though some would not believe it; others, as men amazed, said it was a miracle; but one amongst the rest thanked God for it, and said, "Now at length it proves worth while to be studious, and to serve God whole-heartedly." You have heard my tale: but alas! it is but a tale, a mere fiction, 'twas never so, never like to be, and so let it rest.

It may be that you might prefer to break up some of the longer sentences and, for the semi-colons, used by Burton, substitute full-stops.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Place the appropriate stop at the end of the sentences in the extract from *The Times* below:

"How can you remain glamorous if you have to spend days

on end in railway coaches in intolerable heat" This heart's cry of Mr. Basil Dean must appeal to everybody, even to the large majority conscious that it can have no application to them. Whoever was the first to "dower his native language with a word of power" and whatever he precisely meant by it, most of us are perfectly aware of not being glamorous, but we are equally well aware of not appearing at our modest best after a journey. "You're looking very green and ugly," an affectionate grandmother used to say to her grandson, when he got back from school after catching a train so early as to preclude much washing, and her words have a wider application. There are some experiences, such as a Channel crossing, productive of a plainness so dreary and piteous that it can be taken as read; yet, as even the shortest of railway journeys nears its close, an atmosphere of titivating prevails, and that not merely among the ladies. The least self-conscious of men straighten the tie, give a pull to the waist-coat, and are envious of those little handmirrors which might reveal a smudge on the nose. After a night journey, even in the now half-forgotten glory of a sleeping car, the first instinct is to plunge still unwelcomed into a bath and slough that most unglamorous sensation of grubbiness which pervades the entire being.

If this be true of travel in conditions of comfort bordering on luxury, how infinitely more true it must have been of a night in a stage coach.

2. Place the appropriate stop at the end of each sentence :

- (a) What schoolboy of fourteen is ignorant of this remarkable occurrence
- (b) How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child
- (c) There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune
- (d) He asked me where I was going
- (e) B. Is not the Giant's-Causeway worth seeing
J. Worth seeing yes; but not worth going to see
[What stop is appropriate after *seeing* in Johnson's reply?]
- (f) Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy
- (g) Bless thee, Bottom bless thee thou art translated
- (h) Lord, what fools these mortals be

ANSWERS

1. In *The Times* extract you need a question mark at the end of the first sentence, an exclamation mark at the end of the last sentence, and full-stops at the end of the other sentences.

2. (a) question mark ; (b) exclamation mark ; (c) full-stop ; (d) full-stop ; (e) question marks after the two *seeing's*, full-stop after *see* ; (f) exclamation mark ; (g) exclamation marks after *Bottom* and *thee*, full-stop after *translated* ; (h) exclamation mark.

Study X

THE QUESTION MARK AND OTHERS

THE QUESTION

What are the precautions to take in regard to the question mark or note of interrogation?

THE ANSWER

Consider a little first of all what this question mark really is. You know that *query* is the spelling we adopt for the Latin imperative verb *quaere*, which means "question this", "inquire into it". So, too, the stop that we use in order to indicate a direct question is also reminiscent of a Latin word, the word *quaestio*. A writer of Latin, having a desire to indicate his doubt concerning the correctness of a statement would write after the statement *Q*, the first and last letters of *Quaestio*. This would serve as a warning to a reader: it would say to him, "I am not quite sure that this statement is wholly accurate; you had better look into the matter further." Even today, when a lawyer cites a decision with which he is not wholly in agreement, he may append the words "*sed quaere*", "but you should question that before you accept it as the whole truth". The *Q* is now our *?*, our mark of interrogation.

Now, this mark of interrogation is placed after a direct question, and not after an indirect (or reported) question. Look at these instances:

- (1) Have you seen anything of London yet?
- (2) Is this the silent woman?
- (3) Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?

- (4) Didst thou never observe a melancholy-looking, handsome, brick and stone edifice, to the left—where Threadneedle Street abuts upon Bishopsgate?
- (5) Who threw that pellet?

The mark is not appropriate for an indirect or reported question. Thus, if you turn the questions above into reports, you replace the mark of interrogation by a full-stop. Thus—

- (1) Herbert asked Joe whether he had seen anything of London yet.
- (2) Haughty enquired whether that was the silent woman.
- (3) The banished Duke asked whether old custom had not made that life sweeter than that of painted pomp, whether those woods were not freer from peril than the envious Court.
- (4) Elia asks whether you have ever observed a melancholy-looking, handsome, brick and stone edifice, to the left—where Threadneedle Street abuts upon Bishopsgate.
- (5) The teacher asked who threw the pellet.

One trouble about the question mark, the note of interrogation, comes from this fact : you very often frame a command in the form of a question. You may say "Will you please type this again." Now this, though in effect an imperative, a command, calls for the question mark.

Will you please type this again ?

So with Hamlet's injunction to Polonius :

Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed ?
Do you hear, let them be well used.

The first sentence gives the command in the polite question form, and this command is reiterated in the ordinary imperative form by the second sentence.

Indeed, a quite peremptory command may be put in the form of a question as when the Judge says to the impertinent Counsel, "Will you be silent, Sir ?" Though the sentence

does convey a command yet, when you use the question form, use the question mark.

A second trouble is this. An exclamation—of joy, or of grief, or of surprise—may be expressed in a form that would do duty as a question. Here, for instance, is Browning's

How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there!

His use of the exclamation mark asks you to interpret this as an expression of astonishment, and not as a question. If you look for an answer, you close with a question mark; if you look for no answer, you close with an exclamation mark.

Examine these instances:

- (1) With what reverence have I paced thy great bare rooms and courts at eventide [What stop should be here? Charles Lamb—the sentence is one from his *Essays*—has the exclamation mark, not the question mark. It is, you will agree, an exclamatory sentence.]
- (2) How would he chirp and expand over a muffin! How would he dilate into secret history! [Here again, you rightly say, the exclamation mark, not the question mark is needed.]
- (3) O good old man! how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for meat!
- (4) How are the mighty fallen!

Contrast with these exclamations,—these expressions or deep feeling, or of amusement, or of delight, or of dismay—such direct questions as:

- (1) With what luggage did he travel?
- (2) How would you put this question?
- (3) How shall we reward him?

The one form of words, you realise, may be pronounced in varied ways. The stop gives guidance about the pronunciation, and may turn a plain statement into a question, or into an exclamation. You may say

Smith has scored a goal

in such a manner as merely to give information. You wish to state a fact known to you, and that is all. The full-stop, therefore, ends the sentence.

You may, however, by placing emphasis upon *Smith*, make the five words into a question; you seek assurance—a *Yes* or a *No*—of the fact suggested. The question mark is then called for.

You may, moreover, so say the words as to express delight or astonishment. The exclamation mark is then the appropriate stop.

Look, for example, at these lines in which Pope has an exclamation mark:

Statesman, yet friend to Truth! of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear;
Who broke no promise, serv'd no private end,
Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend.

Pope might have written,

Statesman, yet friend to Truth, of soul sincere,

using a comma instead of the exclamation mark. His choice of the exclamation mark calls attention, so Pope suggests, to an astonishing fact. "Is it possible for a lover of Truth and a statesman to inhabit the one house of clay?" Well, here is one at all events.

You do, on occasion, find a writer using the exclamation mark in order to draw your special attention to the statement preceding the stop. "You would hardly credit it," the mark says. Perhaps it is well to avoid such usage. When the mark serves as a neat and concise way of expressing delight or astonishment, its use is justifiable. Even then, though, you soon grow weary of it. The fair Fatima was thus portrayed by the lady explorer:

That surprising harmony of features, that charming result of the whole! that exact proportion of body! that lovely

bloom of complexion unsullied by art! the unutterable enchantment of her smile.—But her eyes!—large and black, with all the soft languishment of the blue!

And a reader is apt to resent the mark when it is, in effect, the writer's chuckle at his own wit: "Haven't I made a very good point here?" he seems to say.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Examine closely this well-punctuated passage of Charlotte Brontë's and ask yourself the reasons that dictated the various exclamation marks:

The sun passes the equinox; the days shorten, the leaves grow sere; but—he is coming. Frosts appear at night; November has sent his fogs in advance; the wind takes its Autumn moan; but—he is coming.

The skies hang full and dark—a rack sails from the west; the clouds cast themselves into strange forms—arches and broad radiations; there rise resplendent mornings—glorious, royal, purple as monarch in his state; the heavens are one flame; so wild are they, they rival battle at its thickest—so bloody, they shame Victory in her pride. I know some signs of the sky; I have noted them ever since childhood. God, watch that sail! O guard it!

The wind shifts to the west. Peace, peace, Banshee—keen-ing at every window! It will rise—it will swell—it shrieks out long; wander as I may through the house this night, I cannot lull the blast. The advancing hours make it strong; by midnight, all sleepless watchers hear and fear a wild south-west storm.

The storm roared frenzied for seven days. It did not cease till the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks; it did not lull till the deeps had gorged their full of sustenance. Not till the destroying angel of tempest had achieved his perfect work, would he fold the wings whose waft was thunder—the tremor of whose plumes was storm.

Peace, be still! a thousand weepers, praying in agony on waiting shores, listened for that voice, but it was not uttered—not uttered till, when the hush came, some could not feel it; till, when the sun returned, his light was night to some.

2. Below is Matthew Arnold's tribute to Oxford. Suggest two instances where the exclamation mark might be replaced by a full-stop :

No, we are all seekers still ! seekers often make mistakes, and I wish mine to redound to my own discredit only, and not to touch Oxford. Beautiful city ! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene !

There are our young barbarians, all at play ! And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection,—to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side ? Adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic ! who hast given thyself so prodigally, given thyself to sides and to heroes not mine, only never to the Philistines ! home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties ! what example could ever so inspire us to keep down the Philistine in ourselves ?

[A full-stop might perhaps be better after " seekers still " and " all at play ".]

3. Give a reason for the several punctuation marks in :

" 'Tis so," said the Duchess ; " and the moral of it is ' Oh ! 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round ! ' "

[Why have the combination of stops—the exclamation mark, the single raised comma, and the double raised commas—after *round* ?]

Study XI

SEMI-COLON AND COLON

THE QUESTION

*What are the uses of the semi-colon and the colon ?
Are they greatly in use in present-day English ?*

THE ANSWER

In much of good English prose of the day the writer is usually well content with full-stop and comma. He uses, to be sure, the other stops when occasion calls for them, but this is not often. Look for instance at the opening paragraph of *The Times* leading article upon Lloyd George. The first three sentences, you note, run smoothly from the opening capital letter to the closing full-stop. Not even a comma interrupts the flow, though you do, when reading the sentences, group the words. Commas come in other sentences, but only commas. Here is the paragraph :

The tidings of Lord Lloyd-George's death knock at every door. None of his countrymen can fail to halt the thoughts of the working day at the news of the passing of one who for so many years was the most vital personality in British politics. It was not his practice in his own working and warring lifetime to ask or to give quarter. But his memory will live, not secure from the conflict of reflective judgements, but clear for ever of the bitterness of ephemeral criticism and contest. Among British statesmen since GLADSTONE none had been more familiar to his own or to other peoples, none had lived more vividly in their comprehension, whether by force of sympathy or of antipathy. Both became rightly eponymous of their period, but LLOYD GEORGE has his own unique claim to universal and enduring honour. He stands where, since his day, one other alone can stand beside him for the nation's deliverance out of the very clutch of defeat and out of such

dangers as Britain had not known before. This is his supreme, his unquestionable service, and this, today and hereafter, will be first in his country's thoughts of him.

Examine, too, the punctuation of this paragraph from *The Times Review* of 1944. You notice that until he inserts the parenthesis, which he marks off by dashes, the writer finds commas and full-stops adequate. And till the very last sentence, where it separates two co-ordinate clauses, the semi-colon does not appear.

After being at least once deferred owing to adverse weather, the immense and hazardous operation of landing on the coast of Normandy was begun in the early morning of June 6, the news of the fall of Rome thus coming as an auspicious prologue. The Royal Navy discharged its initial share of the task with superb technical mastery, setting the whole great landing force ashore at the appointed time and place with scarcely a casualty, and then turning to the construction, by a most remarkable feat of engineering, of a complete artificial harbour in the open waters of the Rade de Caen. The irresistible squadrons of the allied air forces overhead were no less indispensable to the achievement. In the early stages the whole of the land forces were controlled by the English General Montgomery, under General Eisenhower's supreme command, the British and Canadians landing on beaches north of Caen, the Americans falling in on their right, nearer to the peninsula of Cotentin. The first defences were overwhelmed more quickly than had been expected and it was soon apparent that the enemy was finding the utmost difficulty in concentrating his forces—necessarily dispersed before the point chosen for the allied landing had been revealed—owing to the extensive breakdown of his communications under the air bombardment. In particular almost every bridge over the Seine had been destroyed in advance. On the other hand the building up of the allied force for a march inland was also a vast undertaking, which could not be completed in a day. The two sides were therefore evenly matched for the first major trial of strength; it proved severe and for a time doubtful.

In present-day English, you will find, both semi-colon and colon are less used than they were in earlier English. The

colon, indeed, met with quite often in our older literature, has been relegated to the doing of a few odd jobs.

The Semi-Colon and Others

Look at some instances, old and new, where the semi-colon is used :

Sir, I have found you an argument ; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding.

In this retort of Dr. Johnson's you have two complete sentences. But they are set against one another, and the full-stop is postponed. You may find in much present-day writing a comma instead of the semi-colon in such a sentence ; but the more weighty stop is probably better. This, too, is from Dr. Johnson :

A Frenchman must be always talking, whether he knows anything of the matter or not ; an Englishman is content to say nothing, when he has nothing to say.

Examine these three instances from Burke :

- (a) It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do ; but what humanity, reason, and justice, tell me I ought to do.
- (b) Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom ; and a great empire and little minds go ill together.
- (c) When bad men combine, the good must associate ; else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.

And these two instances from Gibbon :

- (a) The various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true ; by the philosopher as equally false ; and by the magistrate as equally useful.
- (b) His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history ; which is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind.

When a writer wishes you to make an impressive pause in

your reading, he has recourse to the colon. Look at these lines from Tennyson's *Ulysses* :

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep
Moans round with many voices.

Tennyson wished to make the movement of these lines very slow. He, therefore, uses the colon instead of the lighter semi-colon or the still lighter comma. And he does not separate the sentences by a full-stop ; for the thought is one. He wants all these facts to combine into one picture for you. Compare the use that Kipling makes of the dash :

There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
~~And—every—single—one—of—them—is—right.~~

And compare the use of the semi-colon and of the comma when the movement is intended to be quicker :

- (a) You value life ; then do not squander time, for time is the staff of life.
- (b) Sir Richard, though badly hurt early in the battle, never forsook the deck till an hour before midnight ; and was then shot through the body while his wounds were being dressed, and again in the head ; and his surgeon was killed while attending on him.
- (c) When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick, the shepherd, blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl.

Finally, look at this picturesque passage from John Morley's *Life of Gladstone*. The semi-colons mark off the various items in the enumeration. The comment is upon the store-house in which Gladstone preserved his letters :

All the riddles of the great public world are there—why one man becomes prime minister, while another who ran him close at school and college ends with a pension from the civil list ;

why the same stable and same pedigree produce a Derby winner and the poor cab-hack; why one falls back almost from the start, while another runs famously till the corner, and then his vaulting ambition dwindles to any place of "moderate work and decent emolument"; how new competitors swim into the field of vision; how suns rise and set with no return, and vanish as if they had never been suns but only ghosts or bubbles; how in these time-worn papers successive generations of active men run chequered courses, group following group, names blazing into the fame of a day, then like the spangles of a rocket expiring.

The Colon

The colon is nowadays engaged in a struggle for existence. In these days of short sentences the use of the colon in the old manner is nearly obviated. You may read whole columns of a newspaper without meeting a single instance, except for some odd jobs, such as—

1. *Introducing an enumeration.* Thus—

The following is a list :

Poems on various subjects
Sermons, etc.

In this use, ushering in a promised enumeration, the colon does duty for *that is to say* or *viz.* or *i.e.*

2. *Introducing a quotation longer than usual.* Thus—
Mr. Churchill said :

Control for control's sake is senseless. Controls under the pretext of war or its aftermath which are in fact designed to favour the accomplishment of wayside totalitarian systems, however innocently designed, whatever guise they assume, whatever liveries they wear, whatever slogans they mouth, are a fraud which should be mercilessly exposed to the British public.

At the head of our mainmast we, like the United States, fly the flag of free enterprise. We are determined that the native genius and spirit of adventure, of risk-taking in peace as in war, shall bear our fortunes forward, finding profitable work

and profitable trade for our people, and also we are determined that good and thrifty housekeeping, both national and private, shall sustain our economy.

This does not mean that we are likely to run short of necessary controls. While food is scarce it must be fairly shared. While thousands of enemy prisoners are in our midst we must still have identity cards. While extraordinary conditions prevail, special powers, safeguards, and regulations will be required. But many of these are evils which will pass away, as we recover our natural life and as these years of sombre crises brighten and broaden into daylight again.

For this duty of introducing a quotation the colon is often reinforced by the dash. Thus, every Act of Parliament is ushered in by the statement :

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords, Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

The dash is, you should note, used to give emphasis to other stops. Look at these two instances in Wordsworth's lines, with the question mark and with the semi-colon :

Will no one tell me what she sings ?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today ?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listened, motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

3. *Introducing an explanation (a substitute in this use for the dash).* Thus—

- (a) Capital is kept in existence from age to age ~~by a constant~~ ^{by a constant} ~~reproduction~~ ^{reproduction} ~~by preservation~~ ^{by preservation} ~~and destroyed, generally very soon after it is produced, but those who consume~~ ^{are employed meantime} ~~[Here Mill adds the explanation that we welcome of the first statement—a statement that pulls us up with a jerk.]~~
- (b) In Elizabeth's reign, music and lyrical poetry flourished together: many of the best poems, like the songs in Shakespeare's plays, were written to ~~like the songs in~~
- (c) As good almost kill a man as kill a good ~~book~~ ^{being}.
a man kills a reasonable creature, God ~~kill~~ ^{kill} ~~who kills~~ ^{who kills} ~~who destroys a good book kills reason itself~~ ^{age}; but he of God as it were in the eye. [Here the ~~ex~~ ^{ex} ~~the image~~ ^{the image} ~~antithesis, the two limbs being separated~~ ^{ation is an} ~~by a semi-colon.]~~ ^{the lighter}

An instance of the older use, to mark a long pause when a semi-colon is already in use, is—

As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was foolish, I rejoyce at it; as he was valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him.

Compare these two sentences of Burke:

- (a) Applaud us when we run; console us when we fall; cheer us when we recover: but let us pass on,—for God's sake, let us pass on!
- (b) The use of force alone is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a moment: but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again: and a nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered.

It would seem vain to seek any clear distinction between the colon and the semi-colon. An antithesis may be written with either. Thus—

Alan, it's not the want of will: it's the strength that I want.

(R. L. STEVENSON)

and—

Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one ~~with~~ self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, ~~and~~ inflexible, sagacious.

Where, as so often in the Bible, one expression repeats another in an alternative form, you find the colon. Thus—

- (a) Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be dismayed. [There the second limb gives you the implicit note of the positive.]

- (b) The people that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, light: on hath the light shined.

- (c) But: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run, and not be weary: they shall walk, and faint. [You have there four parallel expressions, the first two in the affirmative, the second two in the negative.]

The nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

- (e) Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. [Notice the semi-colon before the conjunction *therefore* (linking a subordinate clause) and the colon before *and* (linking a co-ordinate sentence).]

- (f) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Look at these other instances of the use of semi-colon and colon and try to decide why the writer has preferred the heavier stop to the lighter comma.

- (a) "Nay, sweet," she said, "let be;
Wert thou more fickle than the restless sea,
Still should I love thee, knowing thee for such."

- (b) As I looked out of the coach-window, and observed that an old house on Fish Street Hill, which had stood untouched by painter, carpenter, or bricklayer, for a century, had been pulled down in my absence ; and that a neighbouring street, of time-honoured insalubrity and inconvenience, was being drained and widened ; I half expected to find St. Paul's Cathedral looking older.
- (c) The well-known shops, however, with their cheerful lights, did something for me ; and when I alighted at the door of the Gray's Inn Coffee-house, I had a new set of spirits.
- (d) An overstrained enthusiasm is more common in respect to Shakespeare than the want of admiration cannot easily surpass his genius.
- (e) Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying ;
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.
- (f) Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.

2. In these lines from *The Winter's Tale* colons separate the items of the compliment, semi-colons separate the subdivisions of the items. You are asked to supply three colons and four semi-colons :

What you do

Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so so give alms
Pray so and, for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too when you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that move still, still so,
And own no other function each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you are doing in the present deed,
That all your acts are queens.

3. In the lines below you have two co-ordinate sentences. Place the semi-colon between these sentences :

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

ANSWERS

1. The Study supplies the reasons.

(a) You need colons after *ever*, *too*, and *function*; you semi-colons after *sell so*, *alms*, *pray so*, and *but*

3. You need a semi-colon after *a-flying*.

Study XII

SOME ODDS AND ENDS

THE QUESTION

Shall we spend this last Study on Punctuation in looking at a few minor matters?

THE ANSWER

Minor they are, yet they give trouble. This of the apostrophe—the name that we give to the raised comma in such a word as *don't*—is one.

The Apostrophe

The apostrophe is a printer's device, its purpose being to show the omission of a letter or letters. It still does this in expressions like "I'll see" and "You can't". Will you notice that the comma signifying the omission of a letter occurs where the letter would have appeared. The word is *didn't*, the comma being between the *n* and the *t*,—not, as so often seen, between *d* and *n*.

The sign was once used in plurals: it still is in instances like the following, where its omission might lend to misunderstanding—"There are too many *and's* in this sentence"; "Dot your *i's* and cross your *t's*."

The rules for the possessive apostrophe that emerge from the practice of good writers are these:

- (a) *Always* use the apostrophe for the noun in the possessive case, and wherever you can the *s* also. (You may, it is true, have a possessive that has become a name in itself. The apostrophe is then sometimes omitted: though the great insurance institution continues to call

itself *Lloyd's*, the great bank prefers to call itself *Lloyds*).

- (b) Do not add the *s* when its addition results in a disagreeable sound.

Thus: "the writer's words" (where *one* writer is intended); but "the writers' words" (where *more than one* writer is indicated).

The addition of another *s* to *writers'* would, you agree, result in an ill-sounding hiss. Compare the possessives in the two sentences below. In the first, an *s* appended to *clearness* would displease the ear; for the word *sake* follows: "He did not know what the message meant at the time; nor what was happening; which may as well, however, for clearness' sake, be explained here." In the second an *s* can, without loss of euphony, be appended to *mistress*; for the word *apartment* follows: "Harry read this and ran up to his mistress's apartment." We have, however, "The men's cloak-rooms"; for there is no reason to object to the resulting sound of *men's*. So, too, you have "the ladies' departments", where, as you should notice, *lady* is made *plural* before being made possessive.

Will you note that the *s* for the possessive is in sound like the *s* in *this*, whereas the *s* for the plural is in sound like the *s* in *was*? This plural *s* may modify a preceding consonant; but the possessive *s* leaves the preceding consonant unaffected. Compare *wives*, the plural,—“Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them”,—with *wife's*, the possessive,—“Such was the wife's dowry.” Compare *lives*, the plural,—“Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives”,—with *life's*, the possessive,—

Life's race well run,
Life's work well done,
Life's victory won,
Now cometh rest.

You get some inconsistency in the use of the apostrophe

with proper nouns. Three Londoners will have three ways of writing the name of the park of Saint James. There will be the full " St. James's Park ", the curtailed " St. James' Park ", and the more curtailed " St. James Park ". Nor can we say with any assurance which of these three is the most prevalent. *The Times* prefers the full, even though this should result in a congregation of sibilants: " If ", begins a leader, " St. James's Square keeps on going gay in its present reckless fashion, there will scarcely be even a memory left of the old London House."

Capital Letters

Letters of a special form and of a large size usually head a page, begin a line of poetry, introduce a new sentence. These are capital (or head) letters. " Majuscule " (somewhat larger letter, that is) as distinct from " minuscule " (somewhat smaller letter, that is) is at times used as the name. Is such a capital called for here? That is a question that sometimes gives trouble.

A capital letter is called for to begin a proper noun, the particular name, not only of persons and places but of things. Instances are below. There is usually also a capital letter for the adjective corresponding to the noun,—*British, French*, and so on. When, however, the adjective no longer readily calls up its noun, the capital letter disappears: we write *saturnine, jovial, stentorian*, and so on, adjectives made from the names of real or fancied persons.

Thus, *The Times* in commenting upon certain " Procrustean regulations " compares them with " draconic laws ", and in the same breath blames some " tantalising offers ". Clearly the assumption is that *Procrustes*, the fabulous Greek robber that brought about uniformity among his victims by stretching or by mutilating them, is less known among us than the Grecian legislator, *Draco* or the severely punished *Tantalus*.

When a common noun and a proper noun are together, it is usual to give the common noun also a capital. Thus we write "the River Thames", "Herne Bay", and the like; we write "bishops, priests, and deacons" but "the Bishop of London".

We also have a capital for common nouns that, being used in one special sense, become in effect proper nouns. *Woolsack*, for instance, is a common noun; but, being used as a concise way of expressing "the honour and power appertaining to the office of the Lord Chancellor", it becomes a proper noun. So we write, "Men of less parts have made their way to the Woolsack." Thus: "The crucial debate in the House of Commons will be concerned with the campaign in Norway"; "That Labour will be found in the Government before the war is over is certain"; "The North felt the depression more than the South." (Compare "The compass points to the magnetic north.")

We have a capital of special design, £, to stand as the initial for *librae* (pounds sterling, that is). The Americans imitate us in this; using the sign \$ (pieces of eight) for their dollars, whereas the French content themselves with a small letter for their francs (fr.).

The convention regarding capitals in the opening and closing of letters is this: for the opening, capitalise each word, "My Dear Sir"; for the closing, capitalise the first and last words, "Your obedient Servant".

For titles the custom is to give a capital to every important word: write *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*; *The Taming of the Shrew*; *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; and so on.

Notice, finally, these two points:

1. Even after a comma or a semi-colon, a capital usually ushers in a quotation. Thus—

Mr. Churchill said, "We must respect the rights and

opinions of others, while holding firmly to our own faith and convictions."

2. Former writers and printers made much greater use than we do of the initial capital. In Milton's *L'Allegro*, as first printed, for instance, you have :

Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with Thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips, and Cranks, and wanton Wiles ;
Nods, and Becks, and wreathèd Smiles.

The modern printer has the rule, "When in doubt use the lower case" ; use the small rather than the capital letters.

The Paragraph

In your longer pieces of writing you will help your reader by arranging your sentences into paragraphs. Perhaps we can define a paragraph as a group of sentences connected with but more or less distinct from the group before and the group after. Look at this instance from Hazlitt's Essay "On Going a Journey" :

. . . at the sight of nature my fancy, poor as it is, droops and closes up its leaves, like flowers at sunset. I can make nothing out on the spot :—I must have time to collect myself.

In general a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects : it should be reserved for table-talk. Lamb is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out-of-doors ; because he is the best within. I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey ; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation, or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town . . .

You have there the closing words of one paragraph (in which he explains that he usually dislikes to talk when walking) ; you have the paragraph (in which he expands upon that topic) ; and you have the opening words of the

following paragraph (in which he discourses upon the arrival for supper).

You will probably keep your reader's attention the better by making your paragraphs fairly short,—not more than half-a-dozen sentences. As an instance of a well-built paragraph here is one of Macaulay's. It is from his account of the trial of the Bishops in the reign of James the Second.

The jury was sworn; it consisted of persons of highly respectable station. The foreman was Sir Roger Langley, a baronet of old and honourable family. With him were joined a knight and ten esquires, several of whom are known to have been men of large possessions. There were some Nonconformists in the number; for the Bishops had wisely resolved not to show any distrust of the Protestant Dissenters. One name excited considerable alarm, that of Michael Arnold. He was brewer to the palace, and it was apprehended that the government counted on his voice. The story goes that he complained bitterly of the position in which he found himself. "Whatever I do," he said, "I am sure to be half ruined. If I say *Not Guilty*, I shall brew no more for the King; and if I say *Guilty*, I shall brew no more for anybody else."

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Insert the apostrophe where custom calls for it:

- (i) I promised, if youd watch a dinner out,
Wed see truth dawn together,—truth that peeps
Over the glasss edge when dinners done.
- (ii) O, what a noble mind is here oer-thrown!
The courtiers, soldiers, scholars, eye, tongue, sword.
- (iii) Give a man the secure possession of a bleak rock, and he
will turn it into a garden; give him a nine years lease of
a garden, and he will convert it into a desert.
- (iv) "Im afraid youve got a bad egg, Mr. Jones."
"Oh no, my Lord, I assure you. Parts of it are excellent."

2. Explain the reasons for the capital letters in this extract from a *Times* leading article:

The debate in the House of Commons yesterday, like that in the House of Lords last Tuesday, gave expression to the interest and anxiety manifested in the negotiations for the revision of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty, and in the decision of the Government to withdraw all British troops from Egypt. In charging the Government with contributing to the present tension through failure to withdraw the British garrisons from the great Egyptian cities, and to give timely indication of their willingness to enter upon the present negotiations, the Opposition were on strong ground. But, whatever be the past errors that can be laid at the door of the Government, it is clear that they must now deal with the situation as they find it to-day.

ANSWERS

1. (i) I promised, if you'd watch a dinner out,
We'd see truth dawn together,—truth that peeps
Over the glass's edge when dinner's done.
- (ii) O, what a noble mind is here o'er-thrown !
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword.

[You had better note well that the possessive pronouns, *ours*, *yours*, *theirs*, do not have the raised comma before the *s*. *One's* does, though. Look, for example, at these lines of Browning's :

- The common problem, yours, mine, everyone's,
Is not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be,—but, finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair,
Up to our means,—a very different thing !]
- (iii) 'Give a man the secure possession of a bleak rock, and he will turn it into a garden ; give him a nine years' lease of a garden, and he will convert it into a desert.
 - (iv) "I'm afraid you've got a bad egg, Mr. Jones."
"Oh, no, my Lord, I assure you. Parts of it are excellent."

2. The reasons for the capital letters in *The Times* passage are these :

- (i) **Egypt**, the name of a particular country, is a Proper Noun.

- (ii) Several names, usually applicable to many, are in the passage restricted to one special individual. The Common Noun thereby becomes a Proper Noun. The examples are **House of Commons, House of Lords, Government, and Opposition.**
- (iii) An Adjective corresponding to a Proper Noun begins with a capital letter unless the correspondence has been lost sight of, or where usage has made the adjective a descriptive word. We write, for instance, *french polish, brussels sprouts, morocco leather*, and so on. Instances of capitalised adjectives in the passage are **Anglo-Egyptian, British, and Egyptian.**

Study XIII

MAINLY ABOUT HOMOPHONES

THE QUESTION

Is it a fact that English spelling presents difficulties?

THE ANSWER

The answer is a very decided Yes. Subject yourself to the little tests below. They will, we think, amuse and interest you ; they certainly will be entertaining tests to set for your friends. And, after submitting yourself and others to these tests, you will yourself readily answer the question. Moreover, when you do realise that pitfalls are about in the spelling of words, you will be wary. You will tell yourself that, to become proficient in spelling, you must force yourself when reading to notice the *look* of the words you read. Indeed, there are those that say, "Only *one* rule exists in English spelling : spell the word as you have SEEN it spelt in books."

Some of the troubles in English spelling appear from the tests.

First of all, we have a good many words that sound alike but are spelled in different ways : these words are sometimes called "homophones". *Homo* is the Greek prefix for *like*, and *phone* is the Greek word for *sound*. The words *you* (in "You and I are agreed"), *yew* (in "Beneath those withered elms, that yew tree's shade"), and *ewe* (in "this ewe-lamb"), are, despite the varying look of the words, all sounded alike. Hear the words *seize* and *seas* : you cannot discriminate. See them in print or in writing and you can discriminate. In

The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove
Now to the moon in wavering morris move.

you want the second ; in " Ruin seize thee, ruthless king "
you want the first.

For this first test you are asked to choose in the particular sentence the homophone wanted :

- (a) (i) They played cards to . . . away the time
(ii) The artifice served to . . . him away.
(Select from *while* or *wile*.)

(Perhaps we should note that, in the northern part of this island, people do in fact make some distinction between the sound of *while* and *wile*.)

(b) Below are three words that rhyme with *blaze* :

- (i) Can'st thou not minister to a mind deceased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
. . . out the written troubles of the brain.
(ii) I can . . . no money by vile means.
(iii) The sun whose . . . are all ablaze
With ever-living glory
Does not deny his majesty,
He scorns to tell a story.
(Select from *rays*, *raise*, *raze*.)

(c) Below are two words that rhyme with *bold* :

- His death, which happened in his berth,
At forty-odd befel,
They went and . . . the sexton, and
The sexton . . . the bell.
(Select from *told* and *tolled*.)

The next little test also asks you to distinguish, to give to the one sound in its particular context the accepted sign.

- (d) In the three sentences below you need a verb, an adverb, and a noun, all beginning with *f*, and all rhyming with *pain* :

He escaped death only by f——ing it.

I would f—— die a dry death.

Old Iona's holy f——

(The verb means "to pretend"; the adverb means "gladly"; and the noun means "temple".)

Would you try to show that you appreciate the differences between the pairs below : you will do this by using the words in appropriate sentences :

bough, bow ; *skull, scull* (with which do you propel the boat ?) ; *cent, scent, sent* ; *limb, limn* ("Apelles limned to life Loathed Vulcan's lovely wife") ; *lesson, lessen* ; *pray, prey* ; *sword, soared* ; *mail, male* ; *yolk, yoke* ; *mien, mean* ; *knight, night* ; *need, knead* ; *dew, due* ; *bald, bawled* ; *cellar, seller* ; *ail, ale* ; *all, awl* ; *vain, vane, vein* ("What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter ? What vane ? What weather-cock ?") ; *ware, wear* ("Let me taste your *ware*", "Motley's the only *wear*") ; *maid, made* ; *choler, collar* ; *wreck, reck* ; *write, right, rite* ; *through, threw* ; *plum, plumb* ; *heart, hart* ; *cock's comb, cockscomb, coxcomb* ; ("the comb of a cock"), ("the fool's cap"), ("a fop").

Look at these examples :

guilt ("The guilt of blood is at your door") ; *gilt* ("Takes the gilt off the gingerbread").

cent ("Three per cent is reasonable") ; *scent* ("He was upon a wrong scent").

pray ("Pray for him, gentle souls") ; *prey* ("Like a lion on his prey").

hue ("Red with a violet hue") ; *hew* ("Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul").

hole ("Round peg in a square hole") ; *whole* (The whole night through).

curb (A means of restraint, that is : "The trot became a gallop soon In spite of curb and rein") ; *Kerb* (The sidewalk, that is : "On the kerb" is the Stock Exchange expression for transactions after business hours and conducted, perhaps, on the pavement).

heart ("Lift up your heart") ; *hart* ("The hart doth lack a hind").

- throne* ("A golden throne in the depths of the sea");
thrown ("He has thrown good money after bad");
guest ("Our honoured guest"); *guessed* ("I little guessed the end").
- two* ("Two a penny, hot-cross buns"); *too* ("This too solid flesh"); *to* ("To bed, to bed, says sleepy-head"). [The vowel sound here, though, is in fluent speech shorter than that in *two* and *too*.]
- sword* ("He shall perish by the sword"); *soared* ("The towering eagle soared aloft").
- hymn* ("First hymn they the Father"); *him* ("Let him depart: his passport shall be made").
- plumb* ("Plumb down he drops" compare "a plumb-line");
plum ("He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum").
- climb* ("The slow moon climbs"); *clime* ("Men of every clime and country").
- medal* ("The reverse of the medal"); *meddle* ("neither make nor meddle").
- cymbal* ("Praise Him upon the well-tuned cymbals");
symbol ("Salt was the symbol of friendship").
- altar* ("Lead a bride to the altar"); *alter* ("Power to alter a decree").
- cellar* ("In cellar cool at ease I sit"); *seller* ("He wrote the best seller of the year").
- choler* ("Hollis, in choler, pulled him by the nose");
collar ("Pull against the collar").
- miner* ("The rugged miners poured to war"); *minor* ("A minor has not yet reached twenty-one").
- stationary* ("This stationary engine remains fixed");
stationery ("Stationery includes paper, pen, and ink").
- all* ("All things that love the sun are out of doors"); *awl* ("The cobbler kept him to his awl").
- ball* ("One black ball in three excludes"); *bawl* ("Speak up, but do not bawl").
- wall* ("Grapes, long lingering on my only wall"); *waul* ("We waul and cry").
- birth* ("Two children at one birth"); *berth* ("A comfortable berth").
- waive* ("I waive the objection"); *wave* ("I wish you a wave of the sea").
- mown* ("The scent of new mown hay"); *moan* ("The moan of doves").

rowed ("They rowed across the stream"); *road* ("On the road to Mandalay"); *rode* ("He rode the horse well").

yolk ("The yolk of an egg"); *yoke* ("The savage bull doth bear the yoke").

Other languages have instances where the one sound (sometimes the one symbol) represents two quite distinct words. English has very many instances, largely owing to the progressive simplifying of forms. Thus in *dough* (flour made into a paste ready for baking) the now silent *gh* once stood for the *k* sound: the loss of that sound makes *dough* homophone with *doe* (the female of the deer). By a similar loss *weight* and *wait*, *might* and *mite*, *right* and *rite*, *bough* and *bow*, become homophones.

It comes to this, you see: in our writing we represent sounds by symbols; but, unluckily our way of representation is not a scientific one. Thus:

- (a) We have words containing a symbol without a corresponding sound: such are *comb* (rhyming with *home*), *climb* (rhyming with *time*), *psalm* (where both *p* and *l* are silent letters), *ghost* (where *h* is silent), *sign* (rhyming with *fine*), *know* (rhyming with *blow*), *deign* (rhyming with *main*), *scent* (where the opening consonant is sounded as in *sent*), *vituals* (which is pronounced *vittles*), and *light* (rhyming with *bite*).
- (b) We are not consistent in our choice of the symbol to represent a sound. Thus, there are six ways of representing the *k* sound; you have the six ways in *can*, *kind*, *queen*, *thick*, *archangel*, *six* (in the last word, indeed, *x* represents the two sounds of *s* and *k*). How many *k* sounds do you find in these lines?

Tax not the royal saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the architect who planned,
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed scholars only.

[You find the sound, you will say, in *tax*, *expense*, *architect* (twice here), *scanty*, and *scholars*.] Here are two ways of representing the *f*—in *fruit* and *philosophy*; two ways of representing the *z* sound—in *zeal* and *rose*; and two ways of representing the *s* sound—in *soon* and *mice*, in *practice* and *practise*. Here are six ways of representing the long vowel *i* sound—in *child*, *fly*, *height*, *eye*, *dye*, *guise*; and four ways of representing the long *e* sound—in *he*, *knee*, *yield*, *plead*.

And look at these pairs of words. They are a few out of many. Alike to the eye, the words are unlike to the ear: *bow* ("with my bow and arrow," where *bow* rhymes with *so*) and *bow* ("Orpheus with his lute made trees, and the mountain-tops that freeze, Bow themselves when he did sing", where *bow* rhymes with *now*); *gill* (of a fish, the *g* having the sound of the *g* in *girl*) and *gill* (quarter of a pint, that is, the *g* having the same sound as the *j* in *jilt*); *lower* (meaning "let down", where the vowel is that of *so*) and *lower* (meaning "to look darkly, frown"—"A shadow lowered on the fields",—where the vowel is that of *now*); *raven* (the bird, that is, whence we have the adjective *ravenous*, where the *a* is that of *cavern*); Milton's pun, therefore, when he speaks of the "ravens though ravenous" bringing food to the prophet at the brook Cherith, is not a great success; *sow* ("And look before you ere you leap; For, as you sow, you are like to reap", where the word is a homophone with *so*) and *sow* (the female pig, where the vowel is that of *now*); *tears* (the noun—"Tears such as angels weep", where the vowel is that of *fear*) and *tear* (meaning "pulling apart", where the vowel is that of *wear*); *entrance* (the noun—"They have their exits and their entrances", where the stress falls on the first syllable) and *entrance* (the verb—"Bid me

discourse, I will entrance thine ear", where the stress falls on the second syllable).

- (c) We have a number of words in which the final *e* represents no sound: such are *stable*, *ride*, *live*, *tongue*, *defence*, *mouse*, *toe*. We notice these matters in *later Studies*.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Now for what is perhaps a harder test. You are asked to supply the omitted letters in these words:

- (1) Scr— is a short form of "subscription"; the term is loosely applied to share certificates in general.
- (2) Scr— is a short form of manuscript: the term is loosely applied to any form of writing.
- (3) We shall practi—e this tomorrow.
- (4) The practi—e was a great success.
- (5) He performed several sl—ght-of-hand tricks.
- (6) Emba—ass (*rr* or *r*); ski—ful (*ll* or *l*); co—ittee (*mm* or *m*); di—a—oint (*ss* or *s*, *pp* or *p*).
- (7) Remini—ces (meaning "recollections"); ces—n (meaning "stopping"); idios—ies (meaning "personal peculiarities"); mis—ll—ous (meaning "several kinds").

2. Select for each of the sentences below the word needed:

- (a) Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a r— or to a young h— upon the mountain of spices.
[*roe* or *row*, *hart* or *heart*]
- (b) Nation shall not lift up s— against nation.
[*soared* or *sword*]
- (c) Sometime t— hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And ever f— from f— sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing c— untrimmed.
[*To* or *too* or *two*; *fair* or *fare*; *coarse* or *corse* or *course*]
- (d) What man is he that lusteth to live: and would f— see good days?
[*fain* or *fane* or *feign*]

- (e) She looks as clear
As morning roses newly washed with d——
[*dew* or *due*]
- (f) Then to the spicy nut-brown a——. [ail or ale]
- (g) Close confinement will —— your health for the worse;
but a holiday in the open air will —— a change for the
better. [affect or effect]

ANSWERS

1. The recognised spelling of the words in question is :
scrip; script; practise; practice; sleight; embarrass;
skilful; committee; disappoint; reminiscences; cessa-
tion; idiosyncrasies; miscellaneous.
2. (a) roe; hart; (b) sword; (c) too, fair, course; (d) fain;
(e) dew; (f) ale; (g) affect, effect.

Study XIV

BEST CONFORM TO FASHION

THE QUESTION

Is spelling really a matter of importance?

THE ANSWER

Yes, it is ; to many nowadays correct spelling is of great importance. Not all are as tolerant as the principal who gently and resignedly says to his secretary, "There are two *m*'s in accommodate." A good many people—people that we cannot afford to ignore—agree with Major Pendennis, who seems to have looked upon correct spelling as an essential mark of the lady. You know the little talk in *Pendennis* :

"I will see her," said Arthur. "I'll ask her to marry me once more. I will. No one shall prevent me."

"What, a woman who spells affection with one *f*? Nonsense, sir. Be a man, and remember that your mother is a lady."

Conform to the fashion in spelling and you will be much more comfortable. To be sure the fashion—the demand for conformity in spelling—is a quite modern one. Look, for example, at the first presentation in print of the seventeenth century "Song : To my Inconstant Mistress". It was written by Thomas Carew, who died in 1639. You will be glad to write it in modern dress :

When thou, poore excommunicate
From all the joyes of love, shalt see
The full reward, and glorious fate,
Which my strong faith shall purchase me,
Then curse thine own inconstancy.

A fayrer hand then thine shall cure
 That heart, which thy false oathes did wound,
 And to my soule, a soule more pure
 Than thine, shall by Loves hand be bound,
 And both with equall glory crown'd.
 Then shalt thou weepe, entreat, complaine,
 To love, as I did once to thee;
 When all thy teares shall be as vaine
 As mine were then, for thou shalt bee
 Damn'd for thy false Apostasie.

There are several noteworthy variations here from the present fashion. One is the greater frequency of the final *e*. Carew, or his printer, has it not only in words where we still retain it—in *fate*, *thine*, *cure*, *false*, *pure*, *love*, *once*,—but in other words where we reject it,—in *poore*, *soule*, *weepe*, *complaine*, *vaine*. And, where present usage has the plural in *s*—*joys*, *oaths*, *tears*—the Song has *es*—*joyes*, *oathes*, *teares*. There is the double *l* in *equall*: you note that we spell *equal* with one *l*, through adding a syllable we also add another *l* in *equalling* and *equally*, whereas the one *l* remains in *equality* and *equalise*. The absence of the apostrophe to denote the possessive case—*Loves hand*, where we write *Love's hand*—is also noteworthy. And, suggesting that consistency in spelling has not always been imperative, there is *then thine* and also *than thine*.

Maybe you will be interested in comparing the first printing of the opening of the second book of Milton's *Paradise Lost* with modern usage:

High on a Throne of Royal State, which far
 Outshon the wealth of *Ormus* and of *Ind*,
 Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
 Showrs on her Kings *Barbaric* Pearl & Gold
 Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd
 To that bad eminence; and from despair
 Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspired
 Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
 Vain Warr with Heav'n, and by success untaught
 His proud imaginations thus displaid.

You note, what is characteristic of the printed works in Milton's time, the fondness for the initial capital letter. You note, too, the intrusion of &, which we make use of in a few business expressions, into the text instead of *and*.

You may well think an earlier spelling to be more in keeping with the sound; you may think also that a spelling not yet approved by fashion would be more reasonable. Yet, unless you are willing to risk being regarded as an eccentric or an illiterate, you had better stick to the customary spelling. It is not to the purpose to say that in itself, so long as the intended word is adequately indicated, spelling is of no consequence. Nor is it to the purpose to say that the spelling of a word was once different from the modern spelling, and will quite likely be different in time to come. A hundred years ago a jovial hunter tells how heartily, after an arduous morning's hunt, he enjoyed "a very fine Hare and Raspberry puffs"; you had better write "a very fine hare and raspberry puffs".

Some of the troubles in spelling arise from the fact that in a small number of instances, variants are admitted as correct; and the English preference may diverge from the American preference. Which, for example, is the better spelling, *gaol* or *jail*? However you spell the word you pronounce it so as to rhyme with *gale* and *pale* and *fail*. The *ao* in *gaol* is certainly a strange way of indicating the long *a* sound; and the soft sound of *g* (as distinct from the hard sound in words like *guy*, *gate*, *gaze*) is rare before *a*. The spelling *jail* is, therefore, more in keeping with other words; and *jail* will, we may anticipate, prevail in the end. *Gaol* persists because, from its first introduction in Law French, it has been the official spelling.

Gypsy and *gipsy* are other alternatives contending for recognition as the correct spelling. People anxious to retain an indication of the origin of the word write *gypsy*. For the word is *Egyptian* ("This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me,"

says Antony ; and, a little later, " This grave charm . . . like a right gypsy hath, at fast and loose, beguiled me to the very heart of loss "). The tendency, however, is to prefer *i* to *y*. So also in *pigmy* (*pygmy*) ; *silvan* (*sylvan*) ; *siphon* (*syphon*) ; *tire* (*tyre*).

You find the variants in the statute-book itself. One draftsman of a bill writes *connection*, another *connexion* ; one *wagon*, another *waggon* ; one *authorise*, another *authorize* ; one *a dependant*, another *a dependent*. You actually have, suggesting that more than one draftsman has been at work, in the one Act both *cognisance* and *cognizance*, both *mis-demeanour* and *misdemeanor*.

Your French friend wrestles with the vagaries of English spelling and you, his teacher, get some amusement from his bewilderment. The letters deceive ; the sounds are not as he thought. *Put* does not rhyme with *root*, but with *foot* ; *shoe* rhymes with *glue* and *hue* and not with *toe* and *foe* ; the words *ago*, *dough*, *low*, *woe* close with the one sound, though they differ in the representation of it.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Write these two passages from *As You Like It* in modern fashion :

- (a) I have neither the schollers melancholy, which is emulation ; nor the musitians, *which* is fantastical ; nor the courtiers, which is proud ; nor the *souldiers*, which is ambitious ; nor the *Lawiers*, which is politick ; nor the ladies, *which* is nice ; nor the *louers*, which is all these.
- (b) Freize, freize, thou bitter skie,
That does not bight so nigh
As benefitts forgot.

2. How many *k* sounds are there in these lines ?

The gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream.

3. (i) Insert the words needed : *missal, missile, missive*.

- (a) The gun threw the — over ten miles.
- (b) A — contains the service of Mass for the year.
- (c) The sovereign sends a letter — to the electing body instructing them to elect a named man as bishop.

(ii) Insert the words needed : *right, rite, write*.

- (a) Only a little more
I have to —,
Then I'll give o'er,
And bid the world Good-night.
- (b) Wrest once the law to your authority,
To do a great —, do a little wrong.
- (c) No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble — nor formal ostentation.

(iii) Insert the words needed : *might, mite*.

- (a) Let me offer my — of comfort.
- (b) He exerted himself with — and main.

(iv) Insert the words needed : *whither, wither*.

- (a) Age cannot — her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety.
- (b) — is fled the visionary gleam
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

(v) Complete the two words in

Who were these squires and lawyers in the House of Commons, with their talk about "pr-v-l-g-s" and "pr-c-d-nts"?

(vi) Write the words meaning—

- (a) An elaborate praising (pan-g-r-c).
- (b) One of a pair of light oars (s-l).
- (c) The head bones (s-l).

(vii) Finish the words beginning with *pre* :

An unfavourable opinion formed in advance of actual knowledge is a pre—; a favourable opinion formed in advance of actual knowledge is a pre—.

ANSWERS

1. (a) I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all these.

(b) Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh,
As benefits forgot.

2. Three: in *car* (when it is represented by *c*), in *axle* (where *x* has the two sounds of *k* and *s*), and in *Atlantic*.

3. (i) (a) missile; (b) missal; (c) missive.

(ii) (a) write; (b) right; (c) rite.

(iii) (a) mite; (b) might.

(iv) (a) wither; (b) whither.

(v) privileges, precedents.

(vi) panegyric; scull; skull.

(vii) prejudice; predilection.

Study XV

THE ENDINGS OF WORDS

THE QUESTION

Why do the endings of English words lead to mistakes in spelling?

THE ANSWER

End Sounds of English Words

When in doubt about the usual ending of a word—whether *able* or *ible* (*calculable* and *irresistible*), whether *cede* or *ceed* (*concede* and *proceed*), whether *ous* or *eous* or *ious* (*famous* and *righteous* and *serious*)—the sound gives you little help. For, when speaking English, we make much of the beginning of a word, little of its ending. The words *sailor*, *father*, *sombre*, *humour*, have to the eye differing endings; to the ear they all end in the same way.

In this matter of endings, accordingly, as with other problems of English spelling, the weak speller has no infallible rules available. Careful notice of the ordinary usage is again the advice tendered.

Some little help can perhaps be given by arranging lists. These you are invited to read, more than once, aloud, and with your attention wide-awake to the *look* of the word.

Adjectival Endings

Is the ending of this adjective *able* or *ible* or *ble*? It is the first of these suffixes that is usual; it is *able* that we use when making new adjectives. Thus, we have *unable*, *abominable*, *appreciable*, *likeable*, *justifiable*, *comfortable*, *reputable*, *probable*, *incalculable*, *incurable*, *irreparable*, *irrevocable*,

irreproachable, innumerable, inimitable, hospitable, indefatigable, inconsiderable, perishable, practicable, and a host of others ending in *able*. Notice in particular, *chargeable, manageable, changeable, serviceable, knowledgeable*, where we have *e* before the *able* ending. *Able*, we say, is the normal. The endings *ible* and *ble* are the exceptions. *Able* is usually the correct form ; it is *ible* and *ble* that give trouble.

Here is a list of some common adjectives ending in *ible* :

<i>admissible</i>	<i>feasible</i>	<i>plausible</i>
<i>audible</i>	<i>flexible</i>	<i>possible</i>
<i>combustible</i>	<i>forcible</i>	<i>preventible</i>
<i>compatible</i>	<i>gullible</i>	(also <i>preventable</i>)
<i>comprehensible</i>	<i>horrible</i>	<i>reducible</i>
<i>contemptible</i>	<i>impossible</i>	<i>reprehensible</i>
<i>convertible</i>	<i>irrepressible</i>	<i>responsible</i>
<i>corruptible</i>	<i>controversible</i>	<i>reversible</i>
<i>credible</i>	<i>indelible</i>	(also <i>reversible</i>)
<i>defensible</i>	<i>intelligible</i>	<i>risible</i>
<i>destructible</i>	<i>invincible</i>	<i>sensible</i>
<i>digestible</i>	<i>irascible</i>	<i>submersible</i>
<i>dirigible</i>	<i>irresistible</i>	<i>susceptible</i>
<i>discernible</i>	<i>legible</i>	<i>tangible</i>
<i>divisible</i>	<i>negligible</i>	<i>terrible</i>
<i>edible</i>	<i>ostensible</i>	<i>vendible</i>
<i>eligible</i>	<i>perceptible</i>	<i>visible</i>
<i>fallible</i>	<i>permissible</i>	

Here are some that you will often meet in *ble* : *dissoluble, noble, feeble, voluble, soluble*.

Is the ending of the adjective *ous* or *ious* or *eous* or *uous* ? Well, again you rarely have guidance from the sound, and must depend for your safety on sight. Here are often recurring adjectives in *ous* :

vigorous, stupendous, sonorous, tremendous, desirous, jealous, frivolous, anomalous, unanimous, anonymous, enormous.

Here are often recurring adjectives in *eous* :

duteous, efficacious, nauseous, piteous, bounteous, gorgeous,

courteous, hideous, outrageous, advantageous, courageous, instantaneous.

Here are often recurring adjectives in *ious* :

glorious, religious, calumnious, industrious, victorious, delicious, pertinacious, curious, serious, laborious, anxious, luxurious, specious, tedious, ingenious, abstemious, sagacious, rapacious, audacious, spacious, precocious, ferocious, ambitious.

Here are often recurring adjectives in *uous* :

virtuous, conspicuous.

Noun Endings

Is the ending of the noun *tion* or *sion* or *an* ? Here are nouns ending in *tion* :

qualification, duration, secretion, perdition, motion, solution, portion, exception, nation.

Here are nouns ending in *sion* :

mission, collision, pension, diffusion, mansion, compulsion, comprehension, dimension, extension, possession, provision.

Here are nouns ending in *an* :

ocean, musician, logician.

Is the ending of the noun *ance* or *ence* (with *ant* and *ent* for the corresponding adjective) ? Here are nouns in *ance* :

arrogance, elegance, significance, extravagance, tolerance, circumstance, acquaintance, admittance, alliance, allowance, annoyance, appearance (but the corresponding adjective here is *apparent*), *assistance, assurance, defiance, importance, observance, resemblance, concordance, abundance, radiance.*

Here are nouns in *ence* :

benevolence, innocence, magnificence, omnipotence, equivalence, deficiency, experience, obedience, adolescence, convalescence, excrescence, effervescence, quiescence, quintessence.

Is the ending *er*, *ar*, *or*, or *ous*? Here are some words with *er* :

barber, danger, officer, carpenter, mariner, character, commander, pretender, conjurer, juggler, brighter (and all other comparative adjectives of more than one syllable: *softer, swifter, abler*, and so on).

Here are some words with *ar* :

particular, popular, perpendicular, spectacular, similar.

Here are some words with *or* :

sector, emperor, bachelor, proprietor, solicitor, interlocutor, superior, horror, pallor, creator, possessor, professor, negotiator, persecutor, tremor, spectator.

Here are some words with *our* :

demeanour, honour, favour, ardour, odour, saviour, armour, succour.

Verb Endings

Is the ending *cede* or *ceed*? Here is a list of verbs ending with *cede* :

cede, accede, antecede (with noun, *antecedent*), *concede* (noun, *concession*), *intercede* (noun, *intercession*), *precede, recede, secede*. Notice, though, the exception *supersede*.

Here are some verbs ending with *ceed* :

exceed (adjective, *excessive*), *proceed, succeed* (noun, *succession*).

YOUR EXERCISES

Supply the usual ending to the unfinished words :

- This spec—— reasoning is nevertheless false.
(The meaning is “attractive but of little worth”.)
- To be unknown was the means of their continu——.
(The meaning is “persistence, endurance”.)
- Gravity is a natural propen—— towards the centre of the earth.
(The meaning is “inclination towards”.)

- (d) A great sum was exacted in respect of dilapida—s.
(The meaning is “damages to a building”.)
- (e) It is the Understanding that sets Man above the rest of sens— creatures.
(The meaning is “capable of feeling”.)
- (f) We had a most ted— meeting.
(The meaning is “long and tiresome”.)
- (g) 'Tis too late to be ambit—.
(The meaning is “eagerly desirous of honour”.)
- (h) Answers ambig— and with double sense deluding.
(The meaning is “capable of more than one interpretation”.)
- (i) That duration maketh pyramids pill— of snow.
(The meaning is “columns slender in proportion to their height”.)
- (j) To be nameless in worthy deeds exceeds an infam— history.
(The meaning is “widely known for its wickedness”.)
- (k) I read this in a chronic— of events.
(The meaning is “a record in order of time”.)
- (l) The coin is curr— throughout the country.
(The meaning is “in common use”.)
- (m) There are multitudes in the valley of deci—.
(The meaning is “the act of deciding”.)
- (n) He had the indefatig— Mr. Holt at his elbow.
(The meaning is “cannot be wearied”.)
- (o) Their indomit— little minister was away in Ireland.
(The meaning is “that cannot be subdued”.)
- (p) They came in carr— and pair.
(The meaning is “a wheeled vehicle for carrying”.)
- (q) Loveliest vill— of the plain.
(The meaning is “a rather small collection of dwelling-houses and other buildings”.)
- (r) A strange inv— perfume hits the sense.
(The meaning is “not to be seen”.)
- (s) Our court— Antony.
(The meaning is “graciously polite”.)

- (*t*) A clear fire, a clean hearth, and the rig—— of the game.
(*er, or, our*)
- (*u*) The man must have a rare recipe for melanch——, who
can be dull in Fleet Street. (*olly, oly*)
- (*v*) My early and invinc—— love of reading, which I would
not exchange for the treasures of India. (*able, ble, ible*)
- (*w*) These were the most idle and unprofit—— months of my
life. (*able, ble, ible*)

ANSWERS

(*a*) specious ; (*b*) continuation ; (*c*) propension ; (*d*) dilapidations ; (*e*) sensible ; (*f*) tedious ; (*g*) ambitious ; (*h*) ambiguous ; (*i*) pillars ; (*j*) infamous ; (*k*) chronicle ; (*l*) current ; (*m*) decision ; (*n*) indefatigable ; (*o*) indomitable ; (*p*) carriage ; (*q*) village ; (*r*) invisible ; (*s*) courteous ; (*t*) rigour ; (*u*) melancholy ; (*v*) invincible ; (*w*) unprofitable.

Study XVI

WORDS WITH LIKE SOUNDS

THE QUESTION

What English spellings need to be distinguished from one another?

THE ANSWER

The question has been, in a general way, answered in the STUDY OF HOMOPHONES—those words alike in sound but unlike in spelling. It is well worth while to consider the matter further. For many English words, not every one of them exactly the same in sound as the one sometimes misplaced for them, are constantly being interchanged.

Look at *affect* and *effect*, for instance. Confusion between these two is perhaps natural; for if something *affects* you it does have an *effect* upon you. And either may be the word needed for the intended meaning. If you say "The warning did not *alter* his purpose", then *affect* would be a substitute for *alter*; if you say "The warning did not *accomplish* his purpose", then *effect* would be the substitute. Still, you must discriminate; and the best way to discriminate, as with others of these confusing words, is to remember sentences where the words recur.

Thus, *affect* is connected with *affection* (liking, that is); it is, indeed, on occasion used in the sense of *like*. A humorous poet writes of

A Babylonish dialect

Which learned pedants much affect;

and you may know the counsel,

No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.

The usual meaning, though, of *affect* is *have an influence upon, modify, or change*. "The week of fogs affected his spirits"; "The sad tale affected me greatly."

To *effect* a thing is to accomplish it, bring it about. "The prisoner effected his escape." It is *effect* that is allied with *cause*. "The rod", said Doctor Johnson in praising whipping as a punishment, "produces an effect which terminates in itself." And note the phrases: "the desired effect" (*result*, that is), "carry into effect"; "a sentence taking effect from judgement"; "to this effect".

It is hoped that the selection below does not make confusion worse confounded; and you will remember that it is but a selection.

An *angle* (the *g* being sounded as in *girl* and *gull*) is the hook that the angler (the fisherman) uses: "I am, Sir, a Brother of the Angle," says one fisherman to another. You know, too, that a square has four right angles. An *angel* (the *g* being sounded as in *fragile* and *congeal*) is a messenger (the clouds are "angels of rain and lightning"); "A ministering angel shall my sister be," says Laertes in the play.

The *brake* is the apparatus for stopping the wheel ("He was fined for a defect in the brakes"); *break* is the verb meaning beat into pieces ("Break, break, break, On thy cold gray stones, O Sea").

Bail is a temporary release from custody ("He should be admitted to bail if his offence is bailable"); it is also the spelling for the cross-piece on the cricket stumps; *bale* is a bundle ("And on the beach undid his corded bales").

Cord in the sense of rope or twine ("Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken") is the same word as *chord* in the sense of a straight line across a curve. But *chord* in the sense of musical notes sounding well together is a different word and is kin to *concord* ("But I struck one chord of music Like the sound of a great Amen").

The plural of *cloth* (rhyming with *moth*) in the sense of a piece of woven stuff (table-cloth, for instance), or "a fair white linen cloth" is *cloths* (rhyming with *moths*, "cloths of many colours"). The plural *clothes* (pronounced usually *close*, rhyming with *those*, the *o* being long) is used in the sense of garments ("A kind and gentle heart he had, To comfort friends and foes; The naked every day he clad, When he put on his clothes").

Complement (allied to complete) is the number or amount that completes; the *complement* of a ship is the full number needed to man it. *Compliment* is the courteous expression of praise: one writer suggests that "'compliment' is a thing paid by people who pay nothing else".

The *council* is the assembly called together for consultation: our chief council is the Cabinet Council. *Counsel* is the advice given; it is also used for one or for a number of barristers-at-law: "If this counsel be of men it will come to nought."

Cue—the name of the letter *q* and the first letter of *quando*, meaning *when*—is the word that serves as signal to another actor; it is also the rod that strikes the billiard balls—"On a cloth untrue with a twisted cue." *Queue*—the French *queue* means *tail*—is the line, familiar in war-time, of waiting people. And *Kew* is the famous garden.

Dependant is the more usual spelling for the noun meaning one that depends upon another's support: the ending, that is, is as in *defendant* and *Pretendant*. But *defendent* is at times used for the noun as well as usually for the adjective.

Modern spelling practice makes a distinction between *draft*, a rough preliminary sketch, or a selection—"the home-leave draft left this morning"—from a number, and *draught*, the general word for what is drawn—"He was astounded at the draught of fishes", "Sit out of the draught." The *draughtsman* is the man skilled in making drawings; the *draftsman* is the man that puts an agreement into words.

Dyeing, giving a colour or dye to a thing, retains the silent *e* of *dye*: it is therefore distinct in spelling from *dying*, the present participle of *die*—"Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying; Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying." So *singe* (which rhymes with *fringe* and means burns the ends of) keeps the *e* in *singeing*, ("Drake came from singeing the King of Spain's beard"): it is different in both sound and spelling from *singing* ("Thou beside me, singing in the Wilderness"). Notice also these other instances where, for one reason or another, the silent *e* is kept, though a syllable is added: *gauge* (measure, that is) has *gaugeable* for its adjective; *notice* has *noticeable*; and *hie* (meaning hasten) has *hieing* for the present participle.

To *faint* is to swoon, to lose consciousness; to *feint* is to pretend (a feint attack is one intended to mislead the enemy).

Groyne is the wall run out into the sea; *groin* is the depression in the thigh.

Heir and its feminine *heiress* are connected with *heritage* and *inherit*. *Heir* is sounded like *air* ("All the castles I have are built with air").

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Select from the alternatives given the correct word:

- (i) — will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the — of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh.
(*hear* or *here*; *yoke* or *yolk*)
- (ii) Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the —.
(*throe* or *throw*)
- (iii) All rising to great place is by a winding —.
(*stair* or *stare*)
- (iv) A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of
pictures, and talk but a tinkling — where — is no
love.
(*cymbal* or *symbol*; *their* or *there*)

- (v) — they that will times past, I joy to see
My self now live : this age best pleaseth me.
(*praise or prays*)
- (vi) A little house, whose humble roof
Is — -proof.
(*weather or whether*)
- (vii) Dull — he be of — who could pass by
A — so touching in its majesty
(*wood or would ; sole or soul ; sight or site*)
- (viii) To do a great — do a little wrong.
(*rite or write or right*)
- (ix) He hath — me on his back a thousand times
(*born or borne*)
- (x) A word spoken in — season, how good is it !
(*dew or due*)

2. In some of the words below the adding of *ing* or *able* causes a silent *e* to disappear, in some the *e* remains along with the addition. Complete the words :

- (a) (i) Through dy— in the grain the colour is more lasting
[*dye*]
(ii) I am dy—, Egypt, dy—. [*die*]
- (b) (i) The scorching sky sing— the sandy wilds of Barbary.
[*singe*]
(ii) Pretty village fring— the moorland. [*fringe*]
(iii) There they were l— in ambush.
[present participle of *lie*]
(iv) All love, all lik—, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night. [*like*]
- (c) (i) This contract is clearly enforc—. [*enforce*]
(ii) They exhibited a quite excus— curiosity.
[*excuse*]
(iii) The contract must be signed by the party charg—. [*charge*]
(iv) We had very chang— weather during our stay.
[*change*]

possibly because they are afraid of being thought ignorant of the recognised spelling, do give a value to certain of the symbols. Moreover, there are words where we cannot say with any assurance that the letter has quite lost its sound ; at all events, any attached sound is far in the background. Thus, in the words *important*, *pedant*, *pleasant*, *metropolitan*, do you give any sound to the *a* before *n* ?

We have to note, too, that English printers have a curious habit of avoiding—except in a handful of very frequent words like *is*, *an*, *or*, *at*, *on*, *he*, *me*, *us*—words of two letters ; the printers have added a third letter without sound, possibly thinking the three-letter word better looking than the two-letter word. Here are a few instances :

ebb, *add*, *egg*, *Ann*, *inn*, *err*, *are*, *one*.

There is no reason why, apart from the printer's superstition, for each of those words two letters should not suffice.

Here are words—a good many, though not by any means all in the language—containing letters without a corresponding sound :

Silent a :

extraordinary (the first *a* is unsounded), *aisle* (of a church, that is, and pronounced as *isle*).

Silent b :

comb, *climb*, *dumb*, *womb*, *coomb* (meaning a steep valley), *bomb*, *tomb*, *thumb*, *limb*, *benumb*, *crumb*, *succumb*, *plumb*.

Silent c :

schism (meaning a breach of unity and pronounced *sism*), *schedule* (whereas the Americans prefer the *k* sound of the *ch*), *scent*, *sceptre*, *scissors*, *scythe*, *science*.

and notice the very curious spelling of *yacht*, which rhymes with *cot* and *lot*.

Silent d :

Wednesday, *handsome*, *friendship*, *landscape*, *grandfather*,

landlord, landlady. (But careful—perhaps too careful speakers try to give some value to the *d* in these last two words.)

Silent e :

The silent *e*, found in so many English words (*have, life, rate, site*, and a host of others) serves, or served, at times a useful purpose, though not sounded. Thus, in words like *give, above, have, live, love*, the *e* came in this way : formerly *u* and *v* had one sign only ; to indicate that the consonant *v* and not the vowel *u*, was intended, a silent *e* was attached to the consonant. That is why no really English word ends in *v* without the silent attendant *e*.

In words like *bridge, age, page, engage, stage, gage, equipage*, the silent *e* shows that the *g* has a soft sound, the sound different from the hard *g* sound in *bag, magazine, gag, rag*. Notice how the *g* changes in sound in the pairs, *rage* and *rag, stage* and *stag, sage* and *sag*, the first of the pair having a long vowel, the second a short vowel.

In words like *defence, niece, slice*, the silent *e* indicates that the *c* has an *s* sound, as distinct from the *k* sound in words like *picnic*. The two words with silent *e* most likely to trip a weak speller are *were* and *where*. It is worth while considering the distinction between *were* (the verb) and *where* (the adverb) ; for one is constantly being mistaken for the other. “ *Where* are you going to, my pretty maid ? ” “ They *were* called to the colours.” (See Study XXII.)

A good sentence for fixing the adverbs *where* and *there* (both denoting place) in your mind is this : “ Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions, for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making.”

In words like *take, bake, bite, site, mite*, the silent *e* shows that the preceding vowel is a long one : compare *bit* and *bite* ; *hat* and *hate* ; *sit* and *site* ; *slid* and *slide* ; the first of such pairs with short *i* as its vowel, the second with long *i*.

Notice the words *acre*, *sabre*, *one*.

In words like *judgement* (*judgment*), *moveable* (*movable*), *abridgement* (*abridgment*), *acknowledgement* (*acknowledgment*), the silent *e* sometimes appears, is sometimes absent. The more usual form is given first; but you will know that a newspaper or a large office will look for uniformity in the matter—not *judgement* on one page and *judgment* on another.

Silent g :

sign, *deign*, *sovereign*, *feign*, *ensign*, *campaign*, *foreign*, *poignant*, *champagne*, *gnat*, *gnaw*, *gnu*, *gnarl* ("wolves are *gnarling*, who shall *gnaw* thee first"), *gnash*, *gneiss* (a species of rock), *gnome* (a saying or maxim).

Silent gh :

high (with its noun *height*), *nigh*, *night*, *sigh*, *sight*, *bright*, *ought*, *right*, *fight*, *plight*, *delight*, *might* (*almighty*), *wright* (*shipwright*, for instance), *weigh* (i.e. in the balance, with its noun *weight*), *plough*, *slough*, *bough*, *daughter*, *caught*.

Silent h :

aghast, *ghastly*, *ghost*, *gherkin* (small cucumber), *ghetto* (the part of the town allotted to Jews), *ghoul*, *honour*, *heir*, *heiress*, *hour*, *rhapsody*, *rhetoric*, *rheum*, *rheumatism*, *rhinoceros*, *rhombus*, *rhubarb*, *rhyme*, *rhythm*.

Silent k :

knave (sound as *nave* meaning "main body of a church"), *knight*, *knot*, *knell*, *knowledge*, *knick-knack* (but also spelled *nick-nack*), *knife*, *knob*, (*door-knob*, that is), *knock*, *knoll*, *knuckle*.

Silent l :

half, *talk*, *walk*, *balk*, *chalk*, *stalk*, *folk*, *yolk* (i.e. of an egg—compare with *yoke*—"Take my *yoke* upon you"), *calm*, *balm*, *calf* (with its plural *calves*), *would* and *should* and *could*, *alms* and *almoner*, *salmon*, *qualm*, *palm*, *psalm* (with *psalmist* and *psalmody*), *behalf*.

Silent n :

condemn, *hymn*, *linn*, *column*, *solemn*, *autumn* (but you do

sound the *n* in words like *condemnation*, *hymnal*, *columnar*, *solemnity*, and *autumnal*).

Silent p :

empty, *prompt*, *symptom*, *contempt*, *glimpse*, *consumption*, *presumption*, *psalm*, *ptarmigan*, *pseudonym* (a fictitious name).

Silent s :

isle and *island*, *mesne* and *demesne*.

Silent t :

bristle, *thistle*, *nestle*, *jostle*, *castle*, *ostler*, *mistletoe*, *bustle*, *wrestle*, *hasten*, *moisten*, *glisten*, *listen*, *fasten*, *chasten*, *christen*, *chestnut*, *often*, *soften*.

Christmas, *asthma*, *isthmus*.

Silent w :

wrangle (quarrel noisily), *wrap* (i.e. in a wrapper), *wrath* and *wrathful*, *wreath*, *wreck*, *wren*, *wrestle*, *wretch*, *wriggle*, *wring* (i.e. twist ; contrast with "ring the bell, watchman"), *wrist*, *write* (i.e. with a pen ; contrast with *rite*, a ceremony), *writhe*, *wrong*.

Lastly, here are examples of words where, in order to make up the number of letters to three, either the consonant has been doubled or a silent *e* added :

are, *add*, *all*, *awe*, *age*, *ill*, *all*, *inn* ("we were glad to reach the *inn*"—compare the preposition *in* : "Be *in* line"), *awe*, *odd*, *off* ("far-off his coming shone" : compare the preposition *of* : "A flock *of* sheep"), *toe*, *foe*, *hoe*, *mow*, *low*, *sow*.

Here are half-a-dozen curiosities in our spelling : they all have one or more silent letters :

diaphragm (where *ph* has the value of *f*, and *g* is silent).
apophthegm (also written *apothegm* and meaning a short, pointed saying) is pronounced *a'pōthem*, the accent being on the first syllable and the vowel *o* being short.
paradigm (meaning an example or pattern) has a silent *g*.
drachm (which at the outset meant a Greek silver coin and, later, a weight about equal to that of the coin) is pronounced and sometimes spelled *dram*.
yacht pronounced *yōt*, rhyming with *cot*.

phlegm the noun, has the *g* silent ; but the adjective *phlegmatic* (not easily excited, that is) gives a sound to the *g*.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Which words in the following sentences have letters not sounded ?

- (a) There go two-and-forty sixpences, you know, to one guinea.
- (b) Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables.
- (c) He tried the wall with a plumb-line.
- (d) Is there no balm in Gilead ?
- (e) Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ?
- (f) They are brought down and fallen ; but we are risen, and stand upright.
- (g) I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought.
- (h) Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.
- (i) Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants and of nymphs at home.

2. Write in full the complete words below :

- (a) The sweet —salmist of Israel.
- (b) They went in je—pardy of their lives.
- (c) How are the mi—ty fallen, and the we—pons of war perished !
- (d) A —seudonym is a fictitious name assumed by a writer.
- (e) Pig—ns are taught to carry letters.
- (f) —thisis is a wasting disease of the lungs.
- (g) Thro— the long-drawn ai—l— and fretted va—lt
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.
- (h) A dau—ter of our me—dows, yet not co—rse,
Stra—t, but lissom as a hazel wand.

ANSWERS

1. (a) two, know, one guinea ; (b) write, make ; (c) plumb-line ; (d) there, balm ; (e) change, leopard ; (f) are, brought, upright ; (g) sigh, sought ; (h) have, sovereign, eye, face, meadows, pale, heavenly, alchemy ; (i) Here, statesmen, fall, foredoom, foreign, home.

2. (a) psalmist ; (b) jeopardy ; (c) mighty, weapons ; (d) pseudonym ; (e) pigeons ; (f) phthisis ; (g) through, aisle, vault ; (h) daughter, meadows, coarse, straight.

Study XVIII

SOUND AND SYMBOL: VOWELS

THE QUESTION

Are we consistent in our manner of representing the vowel sounds?

THE ANSWER

We are not; and the inconsistency makes yet another trouble for weak spellers. The word *lead* in "Heave the lead" is like in look to the word *lead* in "Return your partner's lead." But the letters *ea* in the first word stand for short *e*, in the second word for long *e*. In these four words, *jeopardy* (danger, that is), *people*, *leopard*, and *yeoman*, you have the combination *eo*. But in *jeopardy* and *leopard* the combination stands for short *e*; in *people* for long *e*; in *yeoman* for long *o*.

How many long *i*'s do you find in the line below?

Arise, shine, for thy light is come.

Four you say,—in *arise* and *shine*, where the silent *e* at the end of the word gives notice that the preceding word is long, in *thy* when *y* has the long *i* sound, and in *light* where the silent *gh* differentiates the vowel sound from that in *lit*.

The *a* in *man* and *fashion* stands for a sound different from that in *pass* and *chant*. *Ow* stands for one vowel in *show* and *glow*, for another in *cow* and *now*. And in the lines

The stream mysterious glides beneath,
Green as a dream and deep as death,

you agree that *stream*, *beneath*, *green*, *dream*, and *deep* all have the same vowel sound—the long *e*; whereas *death* only looks like but is not really a rhyme to *beneath*.

Inconsistencies in swarms you will find. But, so far as concerns our representation of vowels in our spelling, a greater difficulty resides in the fact that we have many more vowel sounds to represent than we have symbols for representing them.

And we have no recognised way of showing whether a vowel sound is long or short. The printer has, indeed, devised a way in many instances. In some words he makes the silent *e* a pointer; compare *hat* and *hate*, *not* and *note*, *tub* and *tube*. Doubling the vowel in other words indicates a lengthening: compare *fed* and *feed*. It is curious, though, that the doubling of a consonant at times indicates that a short vowel precedes the doubling: compare *babe* and *babble*, compare *dubious* (long *u*) and *dubbing* (short *u*), *lady* and *ladder*, *humour* and *humming*, *cope* and *copper*.

The choice between *y* and *i* as a symbol confuses. *I* is usually within a word, *y* at the end: compare *mind*, *king*, *sign*, *sill*, with *fly*, *day*, *bury*, *truly*. Where a syllable is added—as a noun or adjective or verb inflection—to a word ending in *y*, the *y* is usually changed into *i*. Compare *lady* with *ladies*, *happy* with *happier*, *twenty* with *twentieth*, *bury* with *burial*, *glory* with *glorious*, *duty* with *dutiable*, *beauty* with *beautiful*.

In compound words, though, when we are conscious that each element is a separate word the *y* persists: look, for instance, at the words *juryman*, *ladylike*, *fiftyfold*. After another vowel, too, the *y* persists: look at the words *boys*, *coyly*, *buys*, *valleys*. But note well these exceptions *daily* and *gaily*.

Note, too, that in words from Greek you find an internal *y* having the *i* sound: in *nymph*, *system*, *syrup*, *hymn* the short *i*; in *hyena* and *hyacinth* the long *i*.

The symbols *ie* and *ei* and *ee* are all used to indicate the long *e* sound; and the writer once chose his symbol at his whim. So far as concerns *ie* and *ei*, however, the printers

have made something like a rule: the rule is **i before e except after c**. Here are examples of *ie*: *grief, piece, brief, pier, fierce, pierce, relief, siege, cashier, grenadier, achieve, chief, mischief, field, believe, belief, thief, thief, friend, priest, bier, retrieve, irretrievable*. Here are examples of *ei*: *conceive, conceit, receive, receipt, deceive, deceit*. But notice *seize* which goes counter to the rule.

You will not forget, though, that long *e* is also represented by *ea*. Thus, you have *beast, beam, rear, arrears, deal, beacon, heathen, leave, heal, teach, fear, eat, bequeath, meal, plead, treat, feature, eager, meagre, eagle, peace* ("Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war": distinguish from *piece*, "A piece of pie"), *grease, increase, lease, leash, seam, reason, treason*.

But note with care *heaven* (rhyming with *seven*) and *weapon* (having the vowel of *beckon*) where *ea* represent short *e*. Notice, too, *freight* (cargo, that is), *weight*, and *eight* where *ei* represents the long *a* (as in *day*) and also *steak* and *yea*, where *ea* also represents the long *a*.

Below are a number of words in which the vowel sound is represented in a perhaps unexpected way.

1. In these three words the sound of short *i* is represented by *e*: *pretty, England, English*.
2. In these words long *i* is represented by *ui*: *acquire, require, inquire, quire* (*choir* is now the more usual alternative, the sound being the same), *squire*.
3. Notice *fatigue* where the *ue* unsounded gives length to the *i*.
4. Notice *eye* (the seeing organ, the same in sound as the pronoun *I*).
5. Notice *die* (cease to live), and its participle *dying*, alike in sound to *dye* (colour), and its participle *dyeing*.

6. Notice *any, many, Thames*, where the vowel sound is *e* though represented by *a*.
7. Notice *trouble, double, couple, courteous, courtesy, touch, scourge, cousin, courage, country, nourish, flourish, journey*, where *ou* stands for the short *u* sound.
8. Notice *London, come, cover, plover, govern, covet, dozen, front, sponge, affront, stomach, comfort, compass, company, combat, money, onion*, where the *o* stands for the short *u* sound.
9. Notice *dungeon*, two short *u* sounds represented by *u* and by *eo*.
10. Notice that *ow* and *ou* compete for representation of the one vowel sound : *cow, owl, town, crowd, powder, renown*, but *thou, noun, loud, house, sour, stout, hound, sound*.
11. Notice the varied ways of showing the vowel sound that we find in *shoe* and *soon* :
 - (i) by *oo* as in *too, brood, root, doom, goose, swoop*.
 - (ii) by *o* as in *womb, whom, tomb*.
12. Notice the varied ways of showing the long *o* sound :
 - (i) by *oe* as in *foe, toe, woe, sloe, doe*.
 - (ii) by *o* followed by silent *e*, as in *rope, grope, stroke, token, robe, ode, rogue, throne, whole*.
 - (iii) by *oa* as in *soap, goad, roam, roast, coach*.

Notice too, *soul* (the spirit) which is a homophone with *sole* (of a boot) and *sole* (the fish).
13. Notice the ways of showing the vowel sound that we find in *Tuesday* :
 - (i) by *ew* as in *dew, view, crew, threw, knew* (the verb), *new* (the adjective), *chew, yew* (the tree), *ewe* (the sheep), *blew* (the past tense of the verb *blow*).
 - (ii) *ue* as in *true, blue* (the colour), *due* (of a debt), *glue, ague, rescue, virtue, hue* (colour, that is).

(iii) *ieu* as in *adieu*, *lieu*.

(iv) *ui* as in *nuisance*.

14. Notice the alternatives *au* and *aw*: you have *autumn*, *author*, *audacious*, *applaud*, *fraud*, *because*, *clause*, *exhaust*, *pauper*, *daub*, *gauzy* ("Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil"), *haughty*, *laundry*, *saunter*, *slaughter*; and you have *gnaw*, *straw*, *claw*, *pawn*, *lawn*, *tawny*.

FOUR EXERCISES

1. What words in these lines have the long *a* vowel sound?

Ah, what avails the sceptred race!
 Ah, what the form divine!
 What every virtue, every grace!
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
 Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
 May weep, but never see,
 A night of memories and sighs,
 I consecrate to thee.

2. What words in these lines have the long *e* vowel sound?

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
 The furrow followed free;
 We were the first that ever burst
 Into that silent sea.

3. Which words in these verses have the long *i* sound?

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

4. Which words in these lines have the long *o* sound?

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,
Even those who kept Thy faith so pure of old
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones.

ANSWERS

1. avails, race, grace, Aylmer, wakeful, may, consecrate.
2. breeze, free, we, sea.
3. arise, shine, thy, light, arise, Gentiles, thy, light, brighten, thy, rising.
4. O, bones, cold, those, old, stones.

Study XIX

SOUND AND SYMBOL: CONSONANTS

THE QUESTION

What various ways have we of indicating consonant sounds?

THE ANSWER

If we had a perfect phonetic way of showing sounds by means of symbols, we should have a single symbol for a single sound. We have not—probably we never shall have—this perfect way; and therein lies one great trouble over spelling. The one sound is, in our English words, shown in varying ways; and the one symbol stands for varying sounds. Thus the words *fight* and *physical* have the same opening sound, but differing symbols for that sound. The words *city* and *cake* have the same opening symbol, but differing sounds for that symbol.

We study here the consonants that, so far as spelling is concerned, may be pitfalls for the unwary.

The throat or guttural sound usually shown as *g*—the sound that opens *guide* and closes *bag*—is shown as *gg*, *gu*, and *gh*, as well as *g*.

Examples for *g* are:

goose (with its plural *geese*), *grow*, *growth*, *gallant*, *garrison*, *gauge* (measure, that is), *gauze*, *glossary*, *garble*, *gust*, *girl*, *give*, *gate*, *get*, *figure*, *eager*, *gracious*, *government*, *sugar*, *again*, *gymnast*, *gymnasium*, *language*.

Examples for *gg* are:

giggle, *stagger*, *bigger*, *lugger*.

Examples for *gu* are:

guest, *guerdon* (prize, that is), *guard*, *guardian*, *vague*,

harangue, guess, guerilla, guide, guile (deceit, that is), *guillotine*.

Examples for *gh* are :

ghetto, ghost, ghastly, aghast, gherkin (a young green cucumber, that is), *ghaut* (the Anglo-Indian for landing-place).

Notice that *g* before the vowels *i* and *e* often has the sound of *j*. Thus, say aloud these ten words : in the first five the *g* has the same sound as in *garden* ; in the second five the *g* has the same sound as in *just*. The words are :

regal, regard, grateful, ingratitude, subjugate, region, regicide, regenerate, regent, register.

The throat (or guttural) sound shown as *k*—the sound that opens *kind* and closes *thick*—is shown as *k, kh, c, q, and ck*.

Examples for *k* are :

kaleidoscope, kangaroo, kaolin (a fine white clay, that is), *kauri* (a tall New Zealand tree), *keel, keen, handkerchief, kernel* (of a nut, that is), *kerosene, kiln, kilogramme, kilometre, kimono, kiosk, kirtle, kleptomania* (also *cleptomani*, an irresistible tendency to theft, that is), *kraal*.

Examples for *kh* are :

khaki, khamsin (an oppressive hot wind in Egypt).

Examples for *c* are :

cake (you notice that the sound before the vowel *a* is the same as the sound after it), *cage, calm, cachinnation* (loud or immoderate laughter, that is : you notice that *c* before *a* and *ch* after *a* are both sounded *k*), *cajole* (get one's way with another by flattering him, that is), *calculation, calendar* (a table of dates, distinct from *calender*, a machine for pressing), *calf, calibre* (diameter, that is), *campaign, canine, canoe, captain, scale, scanty, scarce, coincidence* (you notice that the second and third *c*'s have the sound of *s*), *cohere, coffee, coercion, colleague, colloquial, comedy, scorn, scoundrel, scourge, scout, colonel* (commander of a regiment, that is : *kernel* above is a homophone), *curious, currant* (small raisin, that is, distinct from *current*, a stream), *curtain, curve, cushion, custom, scull* (a small oar, that is, distinct from *skull*,

the head bones), *sculpture*, *crumble*, *cringe*, *cruet*, *secret*, *scrawl*, *scramble*, *scratch*, *cleanliness*, *claimant*, *clang*, *cling*, *distinct*, *actor*, *bisect*, *section*, *epic*, *public*, *music*.

Examples for *q* (always followed by *u*) are :

quadrilateral, *quaff*, *quail*, *quaint*, *qualm*, *quarrel*, *quay* (artificial landing place, that is, distinct from the homophone *key*), *quadrille*, *question*, *quoit*, *quiescent*, *quintessence*, *quota*, *quotation*, *burlesque*, *coquette*, *squadron*, *squall*, *squirm*, *squire*, *squirrel*, *queen*.

Examples for *ch* are :

echo, *anchor*, *ache*, *school*, *scholar*, *architect*, *archipelago*, *archangel*, *chord* (of music, that is).

Examples for *ck* are :

thick, *sick*, *brick*.

Moreover, the single symbol *x* in many words stands for the combined sounds of *k* and *s*. Such words are :

tax (an imposition, that is, a homophone with *tacks*, small nails), *sex*, *example*, *luxury*, *wax*.

The *f* sound—the sound that opens *friend* and closes *thief*—is sometimes (especially in words that we have adapted from Greek) shown as *ph*, and in other words as *gh*.

Examples for *ph* are :

philosophy, *triumph*, *phantasy*, *phantom*, *phonetic*, *phonograph*, *phrase*, *pheasant*, *phenomenon*, *phlegm* (pronounced *flem*), *photograph*, *physician*, *physiognomy*, *nymph*, *graphic*, *geography*, *monograph*, *prophet* (one that foretells, that is, distinct from its homophone *profit*).

Examples for *gh* are :

draught (of water, that is, distinct from its homophone *draft*, a preliminary sketch), *laughter*, *rough*, *slough*, *enough*, *trough*, *cough*.

The *s* sound—the sound that opens *soon* and closes *loss*—is often shown as *c*.

Examples are :

centre, *cease*, *city*, *circular* (notice that the first *c* has the

sound of *s*, the second the sound of *k*), *circle*, *service*, *cinder*, *space*, *spacious*, *grace*, *gracious*, *peace*, *niece*, *practice* (the noun, distinct from *practise*, its homophone, the verb), *twice*.

The *z* sound—the sound that opens *zest* and closes *topaz*—is often shown as *s*.

Examples are :

thousand, *houses*, *wisdom*, *gooseberry*, *accuse*, *advise*.

Notice how, in many instances, an *s* sound in the noun is, without change of spelling, a *z* sound in the verb. Thus *grease*, the noun, rhymes with *peace*; *grease*, the verb, rhymes with *freeze*.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. The letters missing in the words below represent the sound of *k* as in *Kate*: supply them:

.al.ulation; .aleidoscope; .irtle; ..a.i; s.arce;
.ushion; ..aint; burles...; ar..ite.t; bri..

2. The letters missing in the words below represent the sound of *f* as in *Fred*: supply them:

trium...; ..antom; drau...; lau..ter; .or.eit; .ul.il

3. The letters missing in the words below represent the sound of *g* as in *Gertrude*: supply them:

su.ar; sta..er; ..est; ..erilla; a..ast

ANSWERS

1. calculation; kaleidoscope; kirtle; khaki; scarce; cushion; quaint; burlesque; architect; brick.
2. triumph; phantom; draught; laughter; forfeit; fulfil.
3. sugar; stagger; guest; guerilla; aghast.

Study XX

DOUBLING CONSONANTS

THE QUESTION

Is the consonant here doubled or not?

THE ANSWER

There is the question that the weak speller is apt to answer wrong. That is why such words as invite mistakes in the decision between single and double appear so often in the tests at spelling-bees. In *desiccated* (dried, that is) is it the *s* or the *c* that is doubled; in *exaggerate* is it one *g* or two? In *piccalilli* (sauce, that is) how are the *l*'s distributed? Is it double *r* or double *s* in *harass*? Is it double *r* or double *s* in *embarrass*? Is it the *s* or the *p* that is doubled in *disappoint*?

It seems, indeed, that in the competition for first place among "words commonly misspelled", the words *paralleled* and *accommodation* run one another close. The erroneous doubling of the last *l* in *paralleled* and the erroneous writing of a single *m* in *accommodation* are both deplorably frequent. Yet, as regards *accommodation* at all events, if we think of its companions *commodity* and *commodious*, we should not go astray.

Study then, the instances below, in which "single or double" may be a matter of doubt. And we include *sc* as a form of double *s* (*silent* and *science* have the same opening sound); we include *cq* as a form of double *k* (*aqueduct* and *acquiesce* have the same opening syllable); and also *ck* as another form of double *k* (thus *mimic* and *thick* have the same end sound).

You must know the **look** of the word. For it is unsafe to rely on sound. The words *committee* (those to whom a task is committed) and *comity* (courtesy, that is) sound

alike though so different in look ; *harass* and *embarrass* have their last two syllables like in sound ; *Britain* has one *t*, whereas *Brittany* has two. And look at this group, all beginning with the same sound : *acquaint*, *acquaintance*, *acquiesce*, *acquiescence*, *acquisitive* (*cq* standing for the *k* sound), and *aquarium*, *aquatic*, *aquiline*, *aqueduct*, *aqueous* (*q* alone standing for the *k* sound).

The trouble is the greater because, in one important group, the usage in this country differs from the usage in America. When we add a syllable beginning with a vowel to verbs like *travel*, *control*, *equal* (in which a single vowel precedes the *l*) we double the *l* as in *traveller*, *travelling*, *controllable*, *equalling*, *carolling*.

In America the one *l* is looked upon as enough : compare our *woollen* and the American *woolen*.

Contrast words with a long vowel : *fail*, with *failed* and *failing* ; *boil*, with *boiled* and *boiling* ; *peel*, with *peeled* and *peeling* ; *bowl* with *bowled*, *bowler*, and *bowling*.

And, while we are considering the behaviour of *l*, will you look carefully at these words where one of the compounded words is *all* ? In most of the compounds one *l* is dropped : *always*, *almost*, *almighty*, *also*, *alone*, *altogether*, *already*, *although*. But *all right* is preferred in literary English to the American *alright*.

A rule that may be of some service is this : when a syllable beginning with a vowel is added to a syllable that has a single vowel before a consonant, the consonant is doubled. Thus : *cab* and *cabby*, *shrub* and *shrubbery* ; *bid* and *bidding* ; *red* and *reddden* ; *slug* and *sluggard* ; *humbug* and *humbugging* ; *control* and *controlled*, *controllable* ; *equal* and *equalling* ; *drum* and *drummer* ; *dim* and *dimmiest* ; *fun* and *funny* ; *man* and *mannish* ; *win* and *winning* ; *trap* and *trapped* ; *scrap* and *scrappy* ; *whip* and *whipping* ; *bar* and *barring* ; *stir* and *stirring* ; *prefer* and *preferring* ; *inter* and *interring* ; *abhor* and *abhorrent* ; *pet* and *petted* ; *cut* and *cutter*.

When, however, the vowel is long or is before *r*, the consonant remains single. Thus: *barb* and *barbed*; *daub* and *dauber*; *dead* and *deaden*; *plaid* and *plaided*; *claim* and *claimant*; *gloom* and *gloomy*; *rain* and *raining*; *darn* and *darning*; *sleep* and *sleepy*; *carp* and *carping*; *near* and *nearing*; *chair* and *chairing*; *flout* and *flouting*.

Where the *c*, sounded as *k*, ends a syllable, it becomes *ck* when *ed* or *ing* or *er* or *y* is added: thus *mimic* and *mimicked*, *mimicking*, *mimicker*; *bivouac* and *bivouacked*, *bivouacking*; *panic* and *panicked*, *panicky*. Before *al*, *-ian*, *ion*, *-iot*, *-itz*, *-ise*, however, the *c* remains single: *music* and *musical*, *musician*; *public* and *publican*, *electric* and *electricity*, *phonetic* and *phoneticise*; *optic* and *optical*, *optician*; *public* and *publication*. Notice particularly the words in this list:

fulfil (two single *l*'s), *occurrence* (two *c*'s and two *r*'s), *mis-spell* (so also words like *mislead* with its participle, *misled*), *preferable* (accent on the first syllable), *skilful*, *balloted*, *thralldom*, *riveter*, *wilful*, *discomfited*, *flannelled*, *belfry*, *enrolment*, *bulrush*, *enthrallment*, *bulwark*.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Is the letter single or double? Write the words in full:

- (1) The roads were mu—y. (*d* or *dd*)
- (2) The people had orange cockades t—. (*o* or *oo*)
- (3) He found friendly we—comes and faces in many houses. (*l* or *ll*)
- (4) Tom was sent o— early to a school. (*f* or *ff*)
- (5) There came a troop of drag—ns to the Hall. (*o* or *oo*)
- (6) There they took po—e—ion. (*s* or *ss*)
- (7) Direct persecutions were a—rehended by my lady. (*p* or *pp*)
- (8) The promises of to—eration. (*l* or *ll*)
- (9) Strangers were continua—y arriving and departing. (*l* or *ll*)
- (10) Some active though secret bu—iness employed him. (*s* or *ss*)
- (11) He hid his curiosity unti— he fell asleep. (*l* or *ll*)
- (12) No ga—i—on was put into Castlewood. (*r* or *rr*, *s* or *ss*)

Study XXI

COMPOUND WORDS: HYPHEN OR NOT?

THE QUESTION

When are we to use the hyphen so as to make a compound word?

THE ANSWER

A **compound word** is built up by joining two or more words. The doubts that beset us when we write such a word are not, as a rule, doubts about the combination of letters but doubts about the hyphen. For there are degrees in the closeness of combination. *Blackbird, downfall, wholemeal, barefoot, wardrobe, farewell, spendthrift, outlive, sunshine* ("Young and old come forth to play on a sunshine holiday"), *outwatch* ("where I may oft outwatch the bear"), and a host of words so closely combined that they present one idea, are written without a hyphen. *Father-in-law, lion-hearted, penny-wise, dark-blue, kill-joy, apple-tree, pure-eyed, white-handed* ("O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope"), *far-off* ("I hear the far-off curfew sound"), and other words where each element still presents its own idea, have the hyphen.

Compare *landfall, landlord, landmarks, landscape* with *land-lubber, land-measure, land-tax, land-tenure*, and with *land league* and *common land*. In the first group you have undivided words; in the second group you have the parts joined by a hyphen; in the third group you have separate words to make the compound.

But notice, before you study the "rules" such as they are, how at times the presence or absence of the hyphen has an effect on meaning. The newspaper headline "Virile Old

Girls' Association" would be less ambiguous as "Virile Old-Girls' Association"; for *virile* belongs to *Association*, not to *old girls*. A "waste-paper basket" is a receptacle for such papers as you don't want; a "waste paper-basket" would appear to be basket made of paper, and unwanted.

Rules for Hyphen

In no part of our topic shall we find such variation as in the use of the hyphen: one writer differs from another writer, one printer from another printer. But we can give at any rate two negative rules:

1. Do not use a hyphen when the words do their work quite well separated: "*he worked by rule of thumb*" is correct, though we do write "*rule-of-thumb procedure*". "*Law Latin*", the name of the kind of Latin in which much legal writing was done in the Middle Ages, needs no hyphen. But there would be possibility of mistake without the hyphen in the adjective: "law Latin terms" are not the same as "law-Latin terms". The first seems to be appropriate for the scraps of Latin we still hear in Court, the second for words and phrases used in law Latin. And note the distinction between *china-closet* (the place for storing our china) and *china jars* (jars made of china). "I inquire for the china-closet", writes Lamb; and also "I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination."

2. Do not use a hyphen when the novelty of the combination has worn away, and a word giving a single idea has resulted: write words like *blackbird*, *shoemaker*, *heartbroken*, *henceforth*, *manlike*, *farewell*, *meantime*, *homecoming*, *half-pennyworth*, *overtake*, *withhold*, *countryman*, without the hyphen.

It may, however, be acknowledged that these "rules" are not greatly helpful. Careful noting of the usage of good writers is again the guide.

Here are instances of the usage of the hyphen: you will agree that the combination in which the hyphen appears has not been so firmly combined as to rob the separate words of their identity.

- (i) High Heaven rejects the lore of nicely-calculated less or more.
- (ii) It was now midwinter and they burnt the twelve-ton pinnace. (Contrast *midwinter* and *twelve-ton*.)
- (iii) The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall. (But you will write "Christ Church has produced a good many Prime Ministers".)
- (iv) Under a dark red-fruited yew-tree's shade.
- (v) Pale warriors, death-pale were they all.
- (vi) He glanced o'er books on stalls with half an eye
And fly-leaf ballads on the vendor's string,
And broad-edge bold-print posters by the wall.
- (vii) It was never meant that the Central Criminal Court should become a dumping-ground. (Contrast the separate words, *Central Criminal Court*, with the combination, *dumping-ground*.)
- (viii) The Pay-as-you-earn scheme for employed income-tax payers has its drawbacks. (Note *Pay-as-you-earn*, *income-tax*, *drawbacks*.)

¹ You will not, as is noted above, find consistency; we have *to-morrow* and *tomorrow*, *book-case* and *bookcase*, and a hundred others, where whim seems to decide whether or not the hyphen is to appear. But the tendency is to drop the hyphen where the compound has come to be a common word expressing a special sense. This is particularly so when the final element of the compound has lost its accent: thus we usually find *mid-dáy* for the noun, *midday* for the adjective—

It was now full mid-dáy.
The midday sun.

Write *waterpot* (where there is a single accent and on the first syllable), *downfall*, *breakfast*, *whitewash*, *spendthrift*, *barefoot*, *makeshift*, *masterpiece*, *spellbound*. Contrast these with *grass-grown*, *purse-proud*, *penny-wise*, *long-haired*, *kill-*

jóy, mán-of-wér, hálf-an-hóur, cóach-hóuse. In these latter each constituent of the compound has its strong accent. Where there is no present consciousness that the word is a compound we shall not expect to find the hyphen. A hyphen would be uncalled for in words like *gospel* (good-tidings), *daisy* (day's-eye), *holiday* (holy-day), *Christmas* (Christ's-mass), *fortnight* (fourteen-night).

Yet we may wish to mark separation. We shall then use the hyphen, or even write the constituents of the compound apart: we may have *holy day* and *holy-day* and *holiday*. Thus, we write—

Easter Sunday is a holy day

(when we wish to give an accent to *day*); we write—

Each hóly-day has its special lessons

(when *hóly* is the accented word, and the compound is closer); we write—

Easter Monday is a bank holiday

(with a modification of the spelling when the origin of the word is in the background).

For his special purpose, too, a writer may again separate the elements that we usually see compounded. Thus, Professor Trevelyan has—

In the primæval Saxon forest, hunting had been the duty of the thegn; it was now the pass-time of the unoccupied knight.

Where the compound is new we shall find the hyphen. Look at the instances in this paragraph of Carlyle's—

Language is called the Garment of Thought: however, it should rather be, Language is the Flesh-Garment, the Body, of Thought. I said that Imagination wove this Flesh-Garment; and does not she? Metaphors are her stuff: examine Language: what, if you except some few primitive elements (of natural sound), what is it all but Metaphors, recognised as such, or no longer recognised; still fluid and florid, or now solid-grown and colourless? If these same primitive elements

are the osseous fixtures in the Flesh-Garment, Language,—then are Metaphors its muscles and tissues and living integuments. An unmetaphorical style you shall in vain seek for: is not your very *Attention a Stretching-to*? The difference lies here: some styles are lean, adust, wiry, the muscle itself seems osseous; some are even quite pallid, hunger-bitten, and dead-looking; while others again glow in the flush of health and vigorous self-growth, sometimes (as in my own case) not without an apoplectic tendency.

(*Sartor Resartus*)

One method often used of making these new words is by the prefixing or appending of modifying particles. The Greek prefix *anti* (against) is very much alive, and serves to make words like *anti-vivisection*, *anti-woman-suffrage*. Here, again, when the resulting word has been long in the language, it will be written without the hyphen: *anticlimax*, *antidote*, *antipathy*, even *antimacassar* (the covering over chairs as a protection against the macassar oil once fashionable for the hair).

YOUR EXERCISES

I. Examine the instances of compound words in this extract from *The Times* (April 17th, 1944). You will enjoy deciding why the compounds are printed as they are:

Women crews are now manning the boats on the Grand Union Canal. The boats work in pairs with a crew of three to each pair—a motor-boat towing a “butty”. They carry coal from the Warwickshire coal-fields to London and return with cargoes of steel, aluminium, and copper to Birmingham. The round trip takes sixteen days. . . . Nevertheless it is difficult for the land-lubber to conceive anything more idyllic than life on board the canal barges, and the sight of them chuffing their way along the placid canal waters of England, taking corners under little hump-backed bridges and achieving a closer intimacy with the countryside than

Women crews
Grand Union
Canal
motor-boat
coalfields

Nevertheless
land-lubber
anything
canal barges
canal waters

hump-backed
countryside

ever can be known by travellers in aeroplane, train, or car, is a welcome reminder that there is still a use for a mode of locomotion that is not much faster than a walk. . . .

The girls get no newspapers and their letters only reach them every fortnight ; but this very isolation will increase the envy some will feel for their position.

newspapers

fortnight

2. Write the compounds made up of *three* and *score*, *bride* and *groom*, *chimney* and *sweeper*, *noon* and *day*, *violet* and *embroidered*, *rising* and *ground*, *wide* and *watered*, *fare* and *well*, *witch* and *craft*, *off* and *spring*, *present* and *day*.

3. How, using a compound word, would you write : "the tax on silk stockings", "the wrinkle remover that is infallible", "the Act for the Sale of Goods" ?

ANSWERS

2. The usual way of writing the compounds is : *threescore*, *bridegroom*, *chimney-sweeper*, *noon-day*, *violet-embroidered*, *rising ground*, *wide-watered*, *farewell*, *witchcraft*, *offspring*, *present-day*. ("No small boy yelps 'Monkey on a grid-iron' at the present-day Mr. Hoopdriver.")

3. "The silk-stockings tax", "the infallible wrinkle-remover", "the Sale-of-Goods Act".

Study XXII

PITFALLS FOR THE UNWARY

THE QUESTION

What common words give great trouble to weak spellers ?

THE ANSWER

Well, this Study will, we greatly fear, weary you. For in it we consider only a score or so of words. These words, however, occur so often, and are so often wrongly spelled when they do occur, that certainty about them is cheaply bought, even at the price of weariness. Most of the words are noted elsewhere ; but it seemed good to give a separate Study to them as well.

The words are *their* and *there*, *hear* and *here*, *were* and *where*, *is* and *his*, *whole* and *wholly*, *hole* and *holy*, *air* and *heir* and *ere*, *true* and *truly*, *fulfil* and *all right*.

Their and There

Their is the possessive pronoun “ They ate *their* breakfast ” ; *heir*, he that takes possession—with the same vowel combination *ei* and not *ie*—should help you to remember it. And note that *theirs* with the *s* is a kind of double possession pronoun : “ an old acquaintance of *theirs* ”. Tennyson has written it with the apostrophe : “ *Their’s* not to make reply, *Their’s* but to do and die.” But that is very unusual. Write *theirs*, and leave out the apostrophe, as you do in *hers*, *ours*, *yours*.

There is the adverb of place : “ ‘ Is there anybody there ? ’ said the traveller.” *Here*, also an adverb of place, has the same ending, *ere* : “ Here are sands, ignoble things, Dropped

from the ruined sides of kings." So is the ending in *where*. Here is a good sentence whereby you can fix *where* and *there* (both denoting place) in your mind : "Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions ; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making." (See below.)

And notice the compound words into which this adverb *there* enters : *thereabouts* ("in three hours or *thereabouts*"), *thereat*, *thereby*, *therefore*, *therein*, *therewith*, *thereupon*.

The adverb is often combined with the verb *is* as *there's* : the apostrophe, denoting the omission of *i*, should always appear : "There's a breathless hush in the close tonight."

Look closely at these sentences and it may be that you will not forget the distinction between *their*, the pronoun, and *there*, the adverb :

- (1) (i) Their bodies are buried in peace ; but their name liveth for evermore.
 (ii) Men at some time are masters of their fates.
 (iii) Cowards die many times before their deaths.
 (iv) I sing of may-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes ;
 Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.
- (2) (i) And some there be which have no memorial.
 (ii) When beggars die, there are no comets seen ;
 The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.
 (iii) But yesterday the word of Caesar might
 Have stood against the world ; now lies he there,
 And none so poor to do him reverence.
 (iv) There rolls the deep where grew the tree.

Were and Where

Were (rhyming with *stir*) is the verb : it is the plural form of *was* ("They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions"). It is also the form of the subjunctive mood

of the verb. ("Who but must laugh, if such a man there be? Who would not weep, if Atticus were he!" "If I were the Moor, I would not be Iago.") *Where* (rhyming with *square* is the adverb of place ("Where the bee sucks, there suck I"); it often introduces a question ("Where are you going to, my pretty maid?"). Perhaps your associating *where* with *here* and *there* may fix the spelling in your memory. Will you examine closely these instances?

- (1) (a) They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung.
 (b) Those to whom he formerly looked for protection were forgotten or dead.
 (c) "I am happy where you are," she said, "but we were happiest of all at Walcote Forest."
 (d) The lilies and roses were all awake,
 They sighed for the dawn and thee.
- (2) (a) Cherry ripe, ripe, I cry.
 Full and fair ones; come and buy:
 If so be, you ask me where
 They do grow? I answer, there,
 Where my Julia's lips do smile;
 There's the land, or cherry-isle.
 (b) Smart lad, to slip betimes away
 From fields where glory does not stay.
 (c) Farewell, happy fields, where joy for ever dwells.

Hear and Here

Hear is the verb: *I hear*, with its past tense *I heard* ("Be swift to hear, slow to speak"): the ending is that of *ear*, the organ of hearing. *Here*, with the same ending as *there* and *where* ("Here, there, and everywhere") is the adverb of place ("Come into the garden Maud, I am here at the gate alone"). Here are some instances for your study:

- (1) (a) A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that makes it.
- (b) Though I sit down now, the time will come when you
will hear me.
- (c) Attend, all ye who list to hear our noble England's
praise ;
I tell of the thrice famous deeds she wrought in ancient
days.
- (2) (a) Precept upon precept, line upon line ; here a little,
and there a little.
- (b) Here a solemn fast we keep.
- (c) Here we come gathering nuts in May.

Is and His, etc.

The *h* sound in the possessive pronoun *his* (" With that care lost went all his fear ") should be enough to distinguish from *is*, the verb (" my sentence is for open war "). Yet it is strange how often one of the words is written for the other.

Note that when the adjective *true* becomes the adverb *truly*, the *e* is dropped. Note that when the adjective *whole* becomes the adverb *wholly*, the *l* is doubled and the *e* dropped ; and contrast with *whole* and *wholly* the homophones *hole* and *holy*. Look closely at these instances in the sentences : " Whole towns were left in ruins " ; " A creature wholly given to brawls and wine " ; " A round peg in a square hole " ; " 'Tis holy ground."

In *fulfil* note that each element, both *full* and *fill*, has lost one of the *l*'s ; and note that *all right* is, in English usage, written as two words. *Air* (which we breathe), *heir* (he that inherits), and *ere* (a synonym for *before*) form a curious group of homophones. Look at the instances in " O ! thou art fairer than the evening air " ; " I, the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time " ; " Ere I could make a prologue to my brains, they had begun the play."

YOUR EXERCISES

In the extracts below supply the words wanted :

- (1) W—— light and shade repose, —— music dwells
Lingering and wandering on as loth to die ;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they —— born for immortality.
(were, where)
- (2) (a) As the sun was setting, the little —— was sent in the
arms of his nurse to bed, whither he went howling.
(b) This castle hath a pleasant seat ; the ——
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself.
(air, heir)
- (3) This fell sergeant, death, —— strict in —— arrest.
(his, is)
- (4) (a) He—— will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears.
(b) I am never weary when I he—— sweet music.
(hear, here)
- (5) Air-swept lindens yield
Th—— scent, and rustle down th—— perfumed shows
Of bloom on the bent grass w—— I am laid.
(their, there ; were, where)
- (6) H—— a solemn Fast we keep,
While all beauty lies asleep
Hushed be all things ; (no noise h——)
But the toning of a tear :
Or a sigh of such —— bring
Cowslips for her covering.
(hear or here ; as or has)
- (7) Saul and Jonathan w—— lovely and pleasant in th——
lives, and in th—— death they w—— not divided : they
w—— swifter than eagles, they w—— stronger than lions.
(were or where ; their or there)
- (8) Seest thou a man wise in —— own conceit ? Th——
—— more hope of a fool than of him.
(his or is ; their or there, his or is)
- (9) T—— is nothing more requisite in business than dispatch.
(their or there)

- (10) Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and best,
 That Time and Fate of all th—— Vintage pressed,
 Have drunk th—— Cup a Round or two before,
 And one by one crept silently to Rest.
(*their or there*)
- (11) w—— it not better,
 Because that I am more than common tall,
 That I did suit me all points like a man?
 A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,
 A boar-spear in my hand; and,—in my heart
 Lie th—— what hidden woman's fear th—— will,—
 We'll have a swashing and a martial outside.
(*were or where, their or there*)

ANSWERS

- (1) Where, where, were; (2) Heir, air; (3) Is, his; (4) Here, hear; (5) Their, their, where; (6) Here, here, as; (7) Were, their, their, were, were, were; (8) his, there, is; (9) there; (10) their, their; (11) were' there.

Study XXIII

TRAPS IN ENGLISH SPELLING

THE QUESTION

Is there a list available of the chief traps in English spelling?

THE ANSWER

Here they are in their formidable array; but you had better give at least two sittings to them. You will meet many old friends—or enemies—in the array. Still, you will be glad to have them gathered together in strength for your mastery.

Abbreviate (notice two *b*'s), *abyss* (with its adjective *abysmal*, having one *s* only), *abhorrent*, *abscess*, *acceptor* (the end *or*, not *er*), *accede*, *accession*, *accessary* (that is, one who aids and abets another in committing a crime), *accessory* (a supplement or addition), *accommodate* (note *cc* and *mm*), *accommodation*, *ache*, *achievement*, *aerial*, *aeronautics*, *aesthetic* (that is, satisfying a refined taste), *alleluia* (notice the vowel group *uia*: the more usual spelling is *hallelujah*), *all right* (keep the double *l* and write as two separate words: contrast the words *almighty*, *also*, *altogether*, *almost*, *alone*, *already*), *almoner*, *amateur*, *analysis* (with its plural *analyses*, compare *crisis* and *crises*), *annihilate*, *anticipate* (note *anti*), *archaism* (pronounced *ark-á-ism*), *archipelago*, *ascent*, *association*, *authentic*, *avoirdufois*.

Bannister (but *banister* is also found), *basin* (but *bason* is found, too), *battalion* (two *t*'s, one *l*), *benign* (silent *g* as in *sign*: *biscuit* (*cu* as *k*), *bivouac* (which becomes *bivouacked* with the adding of *ed*), *blonde* (but *blond* without the *e* is found),

boatswain (pronounced *bōsn*), *boulevard*, *breakfast*, *brand-new* (with silent *d*), *breeches* (pronounced *britches* as distinct from *breech* in words like *breechloader*), *broccoli* (two *c*'s), *brusque*, *buoy* (with its adjective *buoyant*), *bureaucrat*, *burlesque*, *business*.

Cacophonous (ill-sounding, that is), *calendar* (the table of dates, that is, different from *calender*, meaning a smoothing-machine), *calf* (plural *calves*), *calibre* (note a similar *re* in *fibre*, *centre*, *theatre*, and note that America prefers the ending in *er*), *calligraphy* (meaning beautiful writing, two *l*'s), *camellia* (the *e* is short), *camelopard* (not *leop*), *carriage* (note *ia*), *catarrh*, *cauldron*, *cease* (but the noun is *cessation*), *centenary* (the hundredth anniversary, that is), *centre* (where American usage is *center*), *ceremony* (note *cere*), *chagrin* (pronounced *shagrēn*), *chalybeate* (pronounced *kale'ibeat*), *chamois*, *champagne* (pronounced *shampan*), *chaperon*, *character*, *chimera* (also *chimaëra*), *chloroform*, *choir* (pronounced and sometimes spelled *quire*), *choleric*, *chrysalis*, *cinematograph*, *clarionet* (sometime spelled *clarinet*), *colossal*, *committee* (two *m*'s, two *t*'s, two *e*'s), *condemn*, *connexion* (perhaps better than *connection*), *connoisseur*, *conscientious*, *consummation*, *contemptible* (note the ending *ible*), *coquette*, *corroborate* (double *r*, single *b*), *coxswain* (pronounced *koxn*), *crochet* (which becomes *crocheting*, *t* remains single), *cuirassier* (note *r* and *ss*), *cyclopædia* (notice *æ*).

Daguerrotype (notice *rr*), *dahlia*, *depot* (silent *t*), *desiccate* (dry, that is; note one *s*, two *c*'s), *despatch* (but also *dispatch*), *Deuteronomy*, *dhow* (perhaps better *dow*), *diæresis* (meaning the separation of vowel sounds as in *aërated*), *diarrhoea* (note *rrh* and *æ*), *diocese*, *diphtheria* (note *phth*), *diphthong*, *disyllable* (note *s* and *ll*), *distil* (but *distillation* with two *l*'s), *dolichocephalic* (long-headed, that is—a term in *Ethnology*), *drachm*, *dysentery*.

Eat with its past tense *ate* (pronounced *ēt* rhyming with *pet*), *efficacious*, *effervescence*, *eleemosynary* (with its seven syllables

el-e-emos-y-nar-y), *embarrass* (two *r*'s, two *s*'s not like *harass*), *endeavour* (and note that America prefers *or* as the ending), *enforceable*, *epaulet* (but also *epaulette*), *equerry* (messenger, that is : note the two *r*'s), *euphemism*, *extraordinary* (with five, not six, syllables : *ex-trord-in-ar-y*).

Facetious, *fakir* (but also *fakeer*), *fiduciary* (credit, that is), *financier*, *flageolet*, *folio* (with its plural *folios*, a contrast with *potato* and its plural *potatoes*), *forecast*, *foreigner*, *forehead* (pronounced *fof-red*), *forenoon*, *foremost* (in these five words the prefix *fore* denotes *before*), *forbid*, *forgo*, *forlorn*, *forgive*, *forswear* (in these five *for* has a negative meaning), *fossil*, *frontispiece*, *fuchsia*, (note *chs*), *fulfil* (but note *fulfilled*).

Gallop (of the horse, that is, with *galloping* as the participle), *galop* (the dance, that is), *gaol* and *gaoler* (more commonly *jail* and *jailor*), *gargle*, *gauge* (measure, that is : note *au*), *garrotted*, *genie* (with plural *genii*), *genius* (with plural *geniuses*), *geography*, *geyser*, *ghost*, *ghetto*, *ghoul*, *grammar* (note *ar*), *gipsy* (but also *gypsy*), *glimpse*, *glycerine*, *gnaw* (silent *g*), *gouge*, *government* (note the *n*), *greyhound* (note *ey*), *guarantee*, *guerdon* (meaning "prize, reward"), *guerrilla* (but the single *r* is often found), *gulch*, *guillotine*, *Gurkha* (note *rk*), *gymnasium*.

Hæmorrhage (bleeding, that is : note the strange combination *rrh* as in the words *catarrh* and *diarrhœa* above ; note, too, that *hem* is also found), *harass* (one *r*, two *s*'s), *heir* (silent *h*), *haulm* (stem of a plant, that is), *hippopotamus* (with plural *hippopotamuses* but at times *hippopotami*), *homœopathic* (note *œo*), *huguenot*, *hygiene* and *hygienic*, *hyphen*, *hypothesis* (supposition, that is, with its plural *hypotheses*).

Idiosyncrasy (*sy*, you note, not *cy*, as the final syllable : the last part of the word is from the Greek *crasis*, meaning "mingling"), *idyll* (but sometimes with one *l* the first vowel

ANSWERS

1. (a) (i) waive, (ii) wave; (b) (i) precedent; (ii) President; (c) (i) to, (ii) too, (iii) two; (d) (i) wrapped, (ii) rapt; (e) (i) peak, (ii) pique; (f) (i) skulls, (ii) sculls.

2. (a) abhorrence, (b) accommodation, (c) unparalleled, (d) consummation, (e) business, (f) guerdon, abhorred, (g) (i) hail, (ii) hale, (h) leisure, (i) harangued, (j) harassed.

Study XXIV

THE SECOND SET OF TRAPS

THE QUESTION

What remain of these traps to weak spellers?

THE ANSWER

Here they are for the time when you are prepared to grapple with them.

Knick-knack (but *nick-nack* is also found), *knife*, *knock*, *knight*, *knoll*, *knee*, *knowledge*, *kukri* (the Gurkha's knife).

Laboratory, *lachrymose* (for ever in tears, that is), *lacquer*, *languor*, *laryngitis*, *leisure* (note *ei*), *liaison*, *licence* (the noun, that is, *license* being the verb), *lichen* (pronounced *liken*, the *i* sound being long), *lieutenant*, *limb*, *limn* (paint, that is), *liquor*, *lucre* (note *re*), *ludicrous*, *luncheon*, *lustre*, *luxuriant*, *luxurious*.

Macabre (gruesome, that is), *mackerel* (note *el*), *mackintosh*, *maelstrom* (whirlpool, that is), *malign* (with silent *g*), *malinger*, *manageable* (note that the silent *e* is retained after soft *g*), *manœuvre*, *manuscript*, *maraschino*, *marquetry*, *marquis*, *marriage* and *marriageable*, *Marseillaise*, *maudlin* (note the ending *in*), *meagre*, *medicine*, *mediocre*, *medieval* (but also *mediæval*), *Mediterranean*, *meerscham*, *Mephistopheles*, *meringue* (pronounced *mërang*, the *e* sound being short), *merriment*, *messuage*, *metamorphosis* (complete change, that is, the plural being *metamorphoses*), *metaphor*, *metaphysics*, *metempsychosis* (transmigration of the soul, that is), *metonymy*, *millenium* (two *l*'s but only one *n*), *miscellaneous* (and *miscellany*), *misogynist* (a woman-hater, that is), *misshapen*, *mitrailleuse*, *moccasin* (two *c*'s and

one *s*), *mocha* (coffee), *Mohammedan*, *molasses*, *monarchial*, *morphia*, *mortgage* (with silent *t*), *moustache*, *mulatto* (with plural *mulattos*), *muleteer* (three syllables), *myriad*, *mysterious*, *myth*.

Naïve (artless, that is), *naphtha* (note the combination *phth*), *necessary* (one *c*, two *s*'s), *negligible* (note *ible*), *neighbourhood*, *nestle*, *neurasthenia*, *neuter*, *nitre*, *nonchalant* (note *ant*).

Oasis (with its plural *oases*), *obedient* and *obedience*, *obeisance*, *oblique*, *obstetrics*, *ochre*, *ogre*, *omelet* (but the longer form, *omellette*, is common enough), *onomatopœia* (name-making, that is: note *pœia*), *orchid* (the ending as *kid*), *oscillate* (note *sc*).

Pachydermatous (thick-skinned, that is), *pageant* (*g* soft followed by *e*), *pajamas* (*pyjamas* is more often found), *panegyric* (a praising, that is: note *gyr*), *paradigm*, *parallel* (with one *r* followed by two *l*'s) and also *paralleled* (one *l* before the *ed*), *parallelogram*, *paralyse*, *parliament*, *parsimony*, *pedagogue* (schoolmaster, that is), *periphrasis* (roundabout way of saying a thing, that is), *phaeton* (a kind of carriage), *perspicacious* and its noun *perspicacity* (having keen intellect, that is), *perspicuous* (clearly expressed, that is), *phalanstery* (a building occupied by a *phalanx*, or company, of socialists), *pharmaceutical*, *pharmacopœia*, *phantasm*, *phenomenal*, *phantasmagoria* (a shifting scene, that is), *philosopher* and *philosophical*, *philtre*, *phlegm* and its adjective *phlegmatic*, *phœnix* (the Arabian bird), *photograph*, *phthisis* (consumption, that is: note the construction *phth*), *physician*, *physiognomy*, *pibroch*, *pigeon*, *pique*, *plagiarism* (the *g* is soft as in *surgeon*), *plague*, *plateau*, *plebeian* (belonging to ordinary people, that is), *plebiscite*, *plesiosaurus*, *plumber* (with silent *b*), *pneumatic*, *pneumonia*, *poignant*, *porcelain*, *porpoise*, *portmanteau*, *precedent*, *preferable* (one *r* only before the *able*), *presentiment* (foreboding, that is), *prestidigitator* (conjurer, that is, one skilled in sleight-of-hand tricks), *prestige*, *privilege* (two *i*'s followed by two *e*'s as vowels),

proboscis, *programme* (American version, *program*), *prologue*, *promenade*, *promiscuous*, *prophecy* (note *cy*), *proselyte* (note *yte*), *pseudonym*, *psychical* (intuitive, that is), *psychology* (note *psy*), *ptomaine*, *pyorrhœa* (note the combination *rrhœ*), *pyramid*.

Qualm, *quandary* (with accent on the *ar*), *querulous* (fretful, that is), *questionnaire* (but also spelled with a double *n*), *queue*, *quiescence* (stillness, that is).

Rancour, but adjective *rancorous*, *rarefaction* (note the *e* before *f*, whereas in the word *rarity* *i* precedes the *t*), *raspberry* (where *sp* has the sound of *z*), *recidivist* (one that has lapsed again into crime), *reckon* and *reckoned*, *recognisance* (acknowledgement, that is), *reconnaissance* (two *n*'s and two *s*'s), *recrudescence* (a breaking-out again), *refutable* (and note *irrefutable*, that cannot be denied), *rendezvous*, *repellent* (note *ent*), *residue*, *restaurant*, *resurrection* (one *s* and two *r*'s), *retrieve*, *rhapsody*, *rhetoric*, *rhythm*; *ricochet* (a glancing blow, that is, the *et* having the sound of *a*), *righteousness*, *rucksack* (note the two *ck*'s).

Saccharine (also spelled *saccharin*), *sacrilegious*, *salicylic* (note the combination *cyl*), *sanguine*, *saponaceous*, *sarcophagus*, *satyr*, *sausage*, *savannah*, *sceptre*, *schedule*, *scheme*, *schism*, *sciagraphy* (shadow-writing, that is), *scythe*, *seize*, *susceptible*, *separate* (note *ara*), *sepulchre*, *seraph* (with its plural *seraphim*), *sergeant*, *serviceable* (note the retention of the silent *e* before *able*), *shibboleth*, *shillelagh*, *shoulder*, *sibylline*, *sieve* (rhyming with *give*, note *ie*), *sign*, *silhouette*, *silvan* (but also spelled *syvan*), *sincerely* (note *ere*), *sinecure*, *siphon* (rather than *syphon*), *sirloin*, *skilful* (note the two single *l*'s whereas *skill* and *skill-less* have a double *l*), *sleigh* (rhyming with *day*), *sleight* (rhyming with *bite*), *slough* (when meaning *bog* rhyming with *vow*, when meaning *skin of a snake* rhyming with *rough*), *sluice*, *sobriquet*, *sojourn*, *solemn* (and its corresponding noun *solemnness* with a double *n*), *sombre*, *somersault*, *somnolence*, *sphere*,

spinach, splendour, squalor, statistician, steadfast, stomach, strychnine, subpcena, subsidence, subtle, sufficient, sulphureous (note the ending *eous*), *supererogation* (note *rer*), *surgeon, surveillance, symbol, sympathetic, synchronise, synthesis* (a placing together, that is, as opposed to *analysis*), *system, syringe*.

Tautology, theatre, thyme (the plant, that is, pronounced as *time*), *till* (but note *until* with one *l*), *tobacconist, tortoise, transcendental, triumph* (and its adjective *triumphal*), *trophy, type, typographical, typhoid, typhoon*.

Unique, until, unwieldy.

Vacillate, vagary (with accent on the *ar*), *venue, vermeil* (bright-coloured, that is), *view, vigour* (with *our*, but *vigorous* with *or*), *violoncello* (note *lon*, not *lin* as in *violin*), *vogue*.

Waistcoat, waltz, walnut (with one *l*, not two as in *wall*), *warehouse, wassail and wassailing, Wednesday* (note *dn*), *weir, wholly* (with two *l*'s whereas *whole* has one *l*), *wilful* (two single *l*'s where *will* and *full* have each a double *l*), *wistaria, woollen* (two *o*'s and two *l*'s, the American preference being *woolen*), *wrath and wrathful, wreath, wrestle, wrinkle, wrong, wrought*.

Yacht, yclept, yolk (that is, of an egg; distinct from *yoke*, a *bond*), *yeoman* (note *eo*).

Zephyr.

YOUR EXERCISES

1. Select the appropriate word from those suggested:

- (1) Don't step off the — without looking. (*curb, kerb*)
- (2) The long day —, the slow moon climbs. (*wains, wanes*)
- (3) To where beyond these voices there is — (*peace, piece*)

- (4) Some are — great, some achieve greatness.
(*born, borne*)
- (5) Often has he known thee past him stray
—, twirling in his hand a withered spray.
And waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall.
(*wrapped, rapt*)
- (6) Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge,
— in thy cloak and battling with the snow.
(*wrapped, rapt*)
- (7) The suit was of — cloth.
(*coarse, course*)
- (8) O, what can ail thee — at-arms ?
(*knight, night*)
- (9) A precedent embalms a —
(*principal, principle*)
- (10) The gull's way and the whale's way,
Where the wind's like a — knife.
(*wetted, whetted*)
- (11) Here shall he see no enemy
But winter and rough —
(*weather, whether*)
- (12) I am acquainted with sad misery
As the tanned galley-slave is with his —
(*oar, o'er, ore*)
- (13) (a) It will not do for you to remain —
(*stationary, stationery*)
(b) The — Office provides Government offices with
writing materials and, nowadays, also provides the
public with a mass of reading matter.
(*stationary, Stationery*)
- (14) (a) A — is money or other thing of value put to
hazard.
(b) A well-cooked beef— would be acceptable.
(*stake, steak*)
- (15) 'Tis against some men's p— to pay interest, and seems
against others' interest to pay the p—.
(*principal, principle*)

2. Complete the words below :

- (1) S—ze, dec—ve, s—ge (*ei* or *ie*).
(2) Pro—, ac—, inter—, suc— (*cede* or *ceed*).
(3) A—reviate (*b* or *bb*), (*ante* or *anti*) —chamber, sa—hire
(*p* or *pp*), la—uer (*q* or *cq*), min—ture (*a* or *ia*), gramm—r
(*a* or *e*), boo—eeping (*k* or *kk*).

- (4) Mischiev—, relig—, right— (*our, eous, ious, uous*).
 (5) Re—, super— (*cede, sede*).
 (6) Co—ittee (*m* or *mm*); di—a—oint. (*s* or *ss, p* or *pp*).

3. Complete the words : the meanings are indicated :

ac—date (find a place for), proc—dure (way of doing),
 prof—or (a chief teacher in a university), coun—led (ad-
 vised), in—te (inborn), col—al (gigantic), pa—d (past tense
 of "pay"), la— (past tense of lie), d—lapidated (partially
 ruined), pro—t (one who foretells), station—ry (writing
 materials).

ANSWERS

1. (1) kerb; (2) wanes; (3) peace; (4) born; (5) rapt;
 (6) wrapped; (7) coarse; (8) knight; (9) principle;
 (10) whetted; (11) weather; (12) oar; (13) (a) stationary;
 (b) Stationery; (14) (a) stake; (b) steak; (15) principle,
 principal.
2. (1) seize, deceive, siege; (2) proceed, accede, intercede,
 succeed; (3) abbreviate, ante-chamber, sapphire, lacquer,
 miniature, grammar, bookkeeping; (4) mischievous, religi-
 ous, righteous; (5) recede, supersede; (6) committee,
 disappointment.
3. accommodate, procedure, professor, counselled, inherent,
 colossal, paid, lay, dilapidated, prophet, stationery.

APPENDIX

The Comma

This additional note upon the comma may be of interest.

Whether or not to insert a comma may at times be a delicate question. And the answer given may have an effect, subtle but still appreciable, upon the sense of the passage. Look at these two contrasted instances. In the poem that, so Shenstone says, was "Written at an Inn at Henley", the last stanza is :

Who e'er has travelled life's dull round,
What e'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome, at an inn.

Maybe Shenstone was smarting under some rebuff or other, maybe his experience has been unlucky. But there is his assertion; and the stamping comma between *welcome* and *inn* emphasises the assertion. The comma in the unexpected place makes more prominent, as doubtless Shenstone intended it to do, the phrase *at an inn*.

Contrast with that the instance below. There the writer holds himself in; he makes his statement quietly, austere. But how effectively! On the anniversary of the Battle of Ypres the poem that A. E. Housman called "Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries" appeared in *The Times* :

These, in the day when heaven was falling,
The hour when earth's foundation fled,
Followed their mercenary calling,
And took their wages and are dead.

Their shoulders held the sky suspended,
They stood, and earth's foundations stay;
What God abandoned, these defended,
And saved the sum of things for pay.

In that last line a writer less conscious of the need for restraint might have put a comma, even a dash, after *things*. Don't you agree that such-an insertion would have been undesirable? It would have been an intrusion, a brawl at a burial.

The question arises, too, whether it is advisable, when writing a long string of figures, to use commas. The commas do give help. As reader, you more readily interpret 2,500,000 than 2500000. As writer, the commas may save you from error: you could not write 250,00 when you intend 250,000; you might write 25000.

In dates and addresses practice varies. No particular objection lies against the commas in

21st October, 1946

and

George Newnes Ltd.,
Tower House,
Southampton Street,
Strand, W.C.2.

Still, it is hard to say what purpose is served by the commas. Certainly there is nothing whatever to be said in defence of the comma sometimes obtruded between the number of the house and the street name:

56, Addison Court,

and the like.

Legal Punctuation

You may have noticed that legal documents are usually without, or nearly without, the guiding and interpreting stops. The lawyer tries to make things perfectly clear and unambiguous by words,—sometimes, you may think, by a superfluity of words. You will have, for instance, a sentence heap like this—

The vendor will sell to the purchasers and the purchasers will purchase at the sum of £5000 free from all charges and incumbrance. ALL THAT the said ship or vessel called "The Swan" whereof Brown is master now lying in the port of Avonmouth a full description whereof is contained in the copy of the certificate of her registry contained in the Schedule hereto Together with all the masts sails sailyards spare anchors cables compasses chains ropes cords stanchions tackle apparel utensils and appurtenances whatsoever to the said vessel belonging or in anywise appertaining WHICH said vessel has been duly registered pursuant to the Act of Parliament in that behalf at Avonmouth aforesaid as appears by the said register.

The Times—Monday, November 16th, 1945—has a leading article upon “Legal Punctuation”. Here is the opening for your entertainment :

An advertiser in *The Times* the other day indulged the luxury of legal punctuation by announcing that three persons were deceased pursuant to the Trustee Act, 1925. To ask whether this use of legal punctuation, which by a paradox is no punctuation at all, amounts to a luxury of style or an advance in war-time economy is to raise a delicate question. Counsel for the defence of this ancient convention of the law commonly insist that by the exclusion of stops and commas ambiguity is avoided, or at least that the responsibility for it is removed from the face of the document and laid on the back of the reader. Certainly the balance-sheets of the litigation of ages have fully justified the practice to the profession. Yet does not the explanation smack of the lawyer’s well-known genius for finding reasons for inveterate “practice” and “common form” which in fact never had reasons but only long-forgotten historical causes ? The historically minded may suspect that lawyers do not use punctuation because the scriptures of their mystery were preserved for centuries in an ancient tongue which knew no punctuation. The Romans, with their formal discipline of case and mood and concord, got along without these instructions for breath-taking and sense-making. So did the ancient Hebrew writers.

Italics

“*Italica Littera*”—Italian Letter or Type—was the name given to that kind of printing type devised by Aldus Manutius of Venice. In this type, now called “*italics*”, the letters slope to the right.

The type is employed in order to give emphasis or distinction. If you should wish the printer to put a word or words in italics, instead of into the ordinary type, you underline the word, or words.

Italics are appropriate for the following purposes :

1. To make distinct words or phrases not yet fully a part of the English language. Here are instances—

- (a) The writer may hope that his words will be studied, that the reader, coming upon an idea new to him, will stop, will consider, will decline to go on till he has this idea firmly in his mind. The speaker cannot hope for such deliberation.

Vox perit, litera scripta manet, is his warning ; the sound of my voice dies away, whereas the written word remains for a record.

- (b) 'Tis all mine, yet none mine (*Omne meum, Nihil meum*).
As a good housewife out of divers fleeces weaves one piece of cloth, as a bee gathers wax and honey out of many flowers, I have laboriously collected out of divers writers.

2. For titles of books and so on, and names of fictitious characters. Here are instances—

- (a) When he killed a calf he would do it in a high style and make a speech (*William Shakespeare*, in *Brief Lives* by John Aubrey).
(b) *Cob* was the strongest, *Mob* was the wrongest, *Chillabob's* tail was the finest and longest !
(c) *Oats*. A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people (*From Dictionary of the English Language by Samuel Johnson*).

3. When you refer to a letter or a word as such, that is, where the letter is not doing its usual work as a symbol, nor the word its usual work as a constituent of a sentence. Thus :

The long vowel *a* is indicated in one way in *pale*, in another way in *pail*.

4. Italics may be used to give emphasis. Thus :

remember the *look* of a word ; it is this *look* that matters in spelling.

You should perhaps be sparing in your italicising in order to give emphasis. This is so, even though some writers whom you admire make much use of the device. Charles Lamb is one. Here, for instance, is a paragraph from his Essay on All Fools' Day :

Many happy returns of this day to you—and you—and *you*, Sir—nay, never frown, man, nor put a long face upon the matter. Do not we know one another ? what need of ceremony among friends ? we have all a touch of *that same*—you understand me—a speck of the motley. Beshrew the man who on such a day as this, the *general festival*, should affect to stand aloof. I am none of those sneakers. I am free of the corporation, and care not who knows it. He that meets me in the forest to-day, shall meet with no wise-acre, I can tell him. *Stultus sum*. Translate me that, and take the meaning of it to yourself for your pains. What ! man, we have four quarters of the globe on our side, at the least computation.

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